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CARMEN STANCIU

THE FORMATION OF THE STUDENT-INTERPRETER OF THE LITERARY WORK THROUGH THE STIMULATION OF LATERAL THINKING

Specialty 532.02 - School Didactics by Levels and Teaching Subjects (Romanian Language and Literature)

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The thesis was developed within the Doctoral School of Educational Sciences at the"Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University of Chișinău, Republic of Moldova.

Composition of the committee for the public defense of the doctoral thesis:

Committee Chair: Silvia GOLUBIȚCHI, PhD hab. in educational sciences, university professor, "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University

Scientific Supervisor: Constantin ȘCHIOPU, PhD hab. in pedagogical sciences, university professor, Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts

Official Reviewers: Viorica GORAȘ-POSTICĂ, PhD hab. in pedagogical sciences, university professor, Moldova State University

Liliana MÂȚĂ, PhD in educational sciences, associate professor, "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău, Romania

Svetlana DERMENJI, PhD in educational sciences, university lecturer, "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University

The defense of the doctoral thesis will take place on December 18, 2026, at 13.00, at the "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University, Building 2, Senate Hall, 1 I. Creangă Street, MD – 2026.

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Author:
STANCIU Carmen _____

Scientific supervisor:
ȘCHIOPU Constantin _____

Chair of the defense committee:
GOLUBIȚCHI Silvia _____

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

Relevance and importance of the research topic. In the contemporary educational context, the emphasis on developing transversal skills, creativity, and adaptability highlights the need to approach lateral thinking in the student's learning process, especially in their role as an interpreter of literary works. Lateral thinking, conceptualized by Edward de Bono, refers to a form of creative, non-linear thinking that involves finding alternative, original solutions to given problems. In a world characterized by rapid change and complexity, developing this form of thinking becomes an essential condition for integrating students into today's society.

In the field of literary education, the student's role can no longer be understood simply as a receiver of a textual message, but rather as an active interpreter, capable of formulating their own reading hypotheses, reconstructing the author's intent, and also proposing personal meanings, validated through argumentation. Interpreting a literary work doesn't mean reproducing a preset content, but rather constructing meanings in interaction with the text, depending on cognitive, emotional, social, and cultural factors. This perspective is supported by Nicholas Rubakin, who considered that a book depends on the one who reads it, that "a book has as many contents as there are readers who have read it" [41, p. 38], the researcher drawing attention to the subjective and active nature of the reading process. In turn, Norman Holland proposes the theory of "reader identity," according to which each individual interprets the text based on their own psychological structure, summarized in the acronym DEFT: defenses, expectations, fantasies, transformations [57].

The relevance of the research topic is also highlighted by recent changes in the national curriculum. The change in the curriculum for the National Assessment, which started in the 2020-2021 school year, marked a turning point in teaching Romanian language and literature: the focus shifted from content reproduction to developing critical thinking skills, functional communication, and interpreting written messages. In this new paradigm, students' originality and spontaneity are valued over patterns. The importance of this effort is also supported by a series of normative documents relevant to the Romanian educational system: the National Education Law no. 1/2011, with subsequent amendments and completions; the Romanian language and literature school curriculum approved by OMEN no. 3393/28.02.2017; the Student Statute, approved by OMEC no. 4742/2016; the Report on the State of Pre-university Education in Romania 2019–2020, among others.

All of these documents promote a student-centered education, focusing on the

development of key life skills and the formation of a critical and creative mind. In this context, developing students' lateral thinking becomes essential, with the teacher facing the complex task of selecting methods and strategies adapted to students' age, cognitive level, and learning styles, in order to turn them into active and authentic interpreters of literary texts. Mediated through lateral thinking, literary reading helps build transversal skills such as empathy, emotional intelligence, the ability to negotiate meaning, and collaboration. These are fundamental skills in an educational system that aims to shape active, responsible citizens who are open to intercultural dialogue. Lateral thinking provides a viable alternative, contributing to the development of metacognitive abilities, such as mental flexibility and hypothesis reassessment.

Thus, the teaching approach aimed at shaping the student as an interpreter of literary works through the stimulation of lateral thinking proves to be not only current but also necessary in the process of modernizing the reception of literature. This type of approach meets the demands of competency-based education, encourages the student's active involvement in the act of interpretation, and contributes to developing an authentic and personal relationship with the literary text. In this way, reading becomes not just a means of getting information, but also a formative experience that shapes the young reader's thinking, sensitivity, and intellectual identity.Description of the situation in the research field and identification of the research problem.

The topic of this research has been addressed in the specialized literature in a series of works by Edward de Bono [9; 10; 11], Vasile Flueraș [12], Constantin Șchiopu [40; 41; 42; 43; 44], Mielu Zlate [47], Constantin Postelnicu [38], Lucas Bill and Spencer Ellen [27], Gârboveanu Maria, Negoescu Victoria, Nicola Grigore, Onofrei Adriana, Roco Mihaela, Surdu Alexandru [15], etc. We mention that each of these authors has significantly contributed to the theoretical and practical foundation of the concept of lateral thinking, by highlighting its role in developing students' cognitive and creative abilities. Thus, Edward De Bono, referring to the specifics of lateral thinking, argues that its processes are radically different from other thinking processes, drawing attention to the distinction that must be made between vertical and lateral thinking, also noting the following: ,,Lateral thinking is not an attack on vertical thinking, but a method to make it more efficient by adding creativity to it" [12, p. 24].

Building on and developing Edward de Bono's ideas, the Romanian researcher Vasile Flueraș provides solid arguments about the usefulness of combining logical thinking with lateral thinking. To better understand the differences between them and how they complement

each other, the author summarizes the key elements of the two types of thinking as presented in De Bono's work, also highlighting several principles that form the basis for stimulating lateral thinking [12]. Discussing the concept of lateral thinking, Mielu Zlate offers a broad classification of thinking forms, within which the distinction between vertical thinking and lateral thinking is also highlighted [47]. Relevant teaching strategies applicable to the development of lateral thinking are also documented in the works of Marin Stoica [39], Marilena Pavelescu [28], Ion Berca [3], where the need for a communicative approach in interpreting literary texts and the importance of coordinating instruction are emphasized with the cognitive processes, to facilitate authentic learning. An essential concern of literature didactics as the science of the teaching process is related to the concepts of ,,literary-artistic education," ,,the formation of the reader/interpreter" and ,,the reception of literary works." Regarding the use of the concept of literary-artistic education, several researchers from the Republic of Moldova have contributed: Vl. Pâslaru [30], C. Șchiopu [44], V. Goraș-Postică [15], M. Hadîrcă [16], M. Marin [24], S. Golubițchi [14], V. Popova [31], M. Vîlcu [45], D-T. Paga [25] etc. The issue of forming the student-reader has been studied by a number of other researchers, such as: C. Parfene [27], A. Panfil [26], N. Eftimie [8], C. Cornea [5] etc. Appreciating the contribution of the mentioned authors to addressing various aspects related to reception, literary-artistic education, and the formation of the student-interpreter of literary works through the mediation of lateral thinking, we also note the following tensions/contradictions:on one hand, there are numerous and substantial approaches regarding the development of the literary reader through fostering and stimulating critical thinking and creativity; on the other hand, theoretical and especially methodological studies on "teaching" lateral thinking are practically missing, with few exceptions, which makes possible the tendency to "robotize" students, driven by their fear of making mistakes, and, implicitly, a series of psychological and/or cognitive barriers; the educational act, by placing the student within certain algorithms, schemes, structures, largely remains tied to the informative-reproductive paradigm, at the expense of stimulating lateral thinking; even the approach to literary text as an act of interactive communication remains bound to templates and algorithms, as evidenced even by the items in student competency assessment tests for final exams and the baccalaureate; the need to approach students' literary-artistic education through lateral thinking, as a viable alternative in education, balanced with rational thinking.

Following the above, we define the research problem: What are the epistemological and methodological benchmarks for shaping a student-interpreter of literary work through the

development of their lateral thinking?

Research hypothesis: Shaping students as interpreters of literary works through stimulating lateral thinking will be effective if: their literary-reading activity is based on both the principles of literary-artistic education and those of reception, which grant them the status of subjects of reading and interpretation of literary works; the methodology (activities, strategies, organizational forms) applied by teachers focuses on the development of lateral thinking; the full potential of interactive literary-creation lessons is leveraged.

Research aim: the theoretical and practical-experimental foundation of the methodology for developing students as interpreters of literary works through the stimulation of lateral thinking. Research objectives: 1. Identifying the conceptual framework (theoretical, aesthetic, literary, and methodological benchmarks) for training students as interpreters of literary works through the stimulation of lateral thinking; 2. Conducting a pre-experimental assessment of students' literary development and lateral thinking; inventorying and analyzing the methodologies applied by teachers in the training of student-interpreters through lateral thinking stimulation; analyzing school regulatory documents (curriculum, textbooks) from the perspective of the methodologies recommended by authors through the development of lateral thinking as a defining factor in the formation of interpreters. 3. Conceptualizing the pedagogical model for training students as interpreters of literary works through the stimulation of lateral thinking.4. Experimental validation of the developed pedagogical model and analysis of the results. 5. Drawing conclusions and relevant recommendations for optimizing the methodology of training students' interpretation skills through the development of lateral thinking.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted along epistemological, theoretical, and praxiological dimensions, drawing on theories concerning the reception of literary works: Iser, W. [18], Jauss, H.R. [19], Cornea, P. [5], and Vianu, T. [46]; the pleasure of the text: Barthes, R. [2]; literary and artistic education: Pâslaru, Vl. [30] and Șchiopu, C. [43]; creativity as the mind’s ability to establish unexpected connections between concepts: Erika Landau [21]; lateral thinking: Edward de Bono [9; 10; 11] and Vasile Flueraș [12]; methodologies for developing the reader/interpreter: Pavelescu, M. [28], Ilie, E. [17], and Șchiopu, C. [40, 41, 42, 43, 44]; and the assessment of literary and communication competence: Goraș-Postică, V. [15] and Hadârcă, M. [16].

Research methods: The study employed theoretical methods (scientific documentation, analysis and synthesis, generalisation and systematisation, abstraction, and theoretical

modelling); practical methods (design, pedagogical experimentation, questionnaires, case studies, observation, and comparison); hermeneutic methods (interpretation of theoretical sources and experimental data); and statistical and mathematical methods (quantitative, qualitative, and comparative processing of the results obtained, as well as graphical representation).

Scientific novelty and originality lie in the theoretical grounding, development, and validation of a model for developing students as interpreters of literary works through the use of techniques designed to stimulate and develop lateral thinking during reading, interpretation, and creative writing activities.

The scientific problem addressed consists in identifying and theoretically substantiating, developing, and experimentally validating a methodology for developing students as interpreters of literary works within reading, interpretation, and creative writing activities that employ lateral-thinking stimulation techniques. This approach has contributed to the development of readers.

The theoretical value of the research is supported by: the examination and clarification of the concepts of „recipient", „student-interpreter", „literary competence", „lateral thinking" and „lateral-thinking techniques"; the theoretical foundation of the methodology for developing interpreters of literary works, centred on the concepts of „reading activity", „interpretation activity", creative writing activity", „creative writing techniques" and —the student as the subject of their own creative activity; and the synthesis of general trends in teachers' approaches to developing readers through the cultivation of lateral thinking.

The practical value of the research is demonstrated by: a model for exploring and interpreting literary texts, based on a system of literary-aesthetic, didactic, and literary-artistic education principles; activities designed to stimulate students' lateral thinking; and recognition of the student as the subject of the creative act;the identification of priority areas for improving methodological practices related to reader development through the cultivation of lateral thinking; the examination of Romanian language and literature textbooks in relation to the principles of literary-artistic education methodology, particularly the development of interpreters through the stimulation of lateral thinking; the assessment of students' levels of literary development according to how they apply lateral thinking when reading and interpreting literary works and engaging in creative writing; the identification of the professional characteristics of Romanian language and literature teachers in relation to methodologies for developing readers through the stimulation of lateral thinking, and the formulation of practical recommendations for modernising initial and continuing teacher

training in literary-artistic education.

Implementation of the scientific results took place within a formative pedagogical experiment conducted during the 2020–2025 academic years at the ―Explorator Teodor Gheorghe Negoiță‖ Lower Secondary School, Sascut, Sascut-Sat branch, Romania. The formative experiment involved 80 lower secondary school students and 30 teachers.

Approval of the research results. The research findings were discussed and approved during meetings of the supervisory committee and research colloquia, and at international, national, and county-level scientific conferences and within projects. They were disseminated through scientific publications related to the research topic, presentations at national and international conferences, and public lessons conducted within the Romanian Language and Literature Teachers' Circle in Bacău County. The findings were also applied through school-based curricula (CDȘ) approved by subject inspectors from the Bacău County School Inspectorate and through the school magazine Creativitate fără vârstă, approved by the Bacău County School Inspectorate.

Publications related to the thesis topic. The core content of the thesis has been presented in 19 scientific articles and publications, including three articles in scientific journals accredited in the

―Register of Scientific Journals in the Relevant Field‖ and supplementary publications, eight papers published in international conference proceedings, two in national conference proceedings, four in county-level conference proceedings, and two curricula approved at county level.

Thesis length and structure: Abstracts in Romanian and English, an introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, 206 bibliographic references, and 27 appendices. The thesis comprises 162 pages of main text, 37 figures and 8 tables.

Keywords: student, interpreter, literary work, development, lateral thinking, lateral-thinking techniques, reading club, interpretation, creative writing, communication, literary and reading competencies.

THESIS CONTENT

The Introduction specifies the relevance and importance of the problem addressed, the research hypothesis, aim, objectives, novelty and originality, scientific results, theoretical significance, practical value, implementation and approval of the research findings, and keywords.

Chapter 1, **Theoretical Foundations for Developing Students as Interpreters of Literary Works through the Stimulation of Lateral Thinking** reviews a range of theories and provides several epistemological clarifications of the key concepts of ,,thinking as a psychological phenomenon and cognitive process", lateral thinking and „ creativity". These theories are analysed diachronically, with reference to definitions and viewpoints proposed by various specialists in psychology, pedagogy, and literary theory.

The analysis of the concept of thinking and the typology of its forms of manifestation highlights the complexity of this higher cognitive process, which is essential to knowledge, learning, and adaptation to reality. The diversity of definitions and classifications presented in the specialist literature including „a chain of actions that perform various cognitive functions" [34, p. 94], ,,a sequence of operations that leads to the disclosure of important aspects of reality and to the solution of certain problems" [6, p. 330], ,,a psychological process that unfolds within an internal, mental, subjective domain, using judgements, reasoning, and cognitive operations through which reality is processed in depth" [47, p. 41], and ,,a procedural unfolding characterised by a high degree of freedom along the vertical axis of knowledge and the axis of time, with knowledge developing, in accordance with cognitive psychology, in both an ascending and a descending direction" [1, p. 89]- demonstrates that thinking is a dynamic system resulting from the interaction between cognitive operations, mental products, and informational content. At the same time, perspectives from the psychology of intelligence and cognitive psychology highlight the decisive role of thinking in problem-solving and the development of intellectual competencies.

Within psychological approaches to the concept of thinking, the distinction between lateral and vertical thinking describes two different ways of processing information and addressing problematic situations. Driven by the need to - rethink thinking, and based on the idea that thinking is not merely an analytical instrument but also a form of creation, Edward de Bono introduced the concept of lateral thinking in 1967. He defined it as „a way of using the mind, like logical thinking, but of a different kind" [10, p. 7]. Starting from the idea that the mind's effectiveness in one-way communication with its environment derives precisely from its ability to create, store, and recognise patterns, E. de Bono concludes that- the purpose of lateral thinking is to overcome limitations by providing means for restructuring, avoiding clichés, and combining information in new ways so as to generate new ideas‖ [9, p. 63]. Building on and developing Edward de Bono's ideas, Romanian researcher Vasile Flueraș provides strong arguments for combining logical and lateral thinking. To clarify the differences between these two types of thinking and explain how they complement each other, Flueraș synthesises their

specific characteristics as presented in de Bono's work [12, p. 33].

Drawing on the contributions of the aforementioned researchers concerning the distinctive features of vertical and lateral thinking, we emphasise that these two cognitive dimensions, although complementary, are based on fundamentally different principles and objectives, and both are essential within the contemporary education system. First, lateral thinking aims to generate new directions for exploration by focusing on unconventional possibilities, whereas vertical thinking proceeds only when there is a clearly defined path based on logical and verifiable reasoning. In this respect, vertical thinking follows a gradual progression in which each step is carefully assessed to ensure its validity, while lateral thinking operates through heuristic leaps, focusing on the final outcome and subsequently completing the intermediate steps. Furthermore, correctness is a central criterion in vertical thinking, whereas lateral thinking temporarily suspends this requirement, prioritising creativity and the achievement of a positive outcome. Second, vertical thinking frequently uses negation as a logical means of eliminating incorrect alternatives, whereas lateral thinking relies on affirmation and a positive attitude, following the constructive principle: „I must be able to do it!" Moreover, while vertical thinking tends to eliminate information or ideas considered unproductive and focuses exclusively on the established direction, lateral thinking makes use of unexpected contributions, viewing them as potential sources of innovation. Finally, while vertical thinking is characterised by analysis, precision, and logical rigour, lateral thinking is exploratory and challenging, relying not on certainty about the path to follow but on the possibility of discovering unconventional solutions. These two interrelated forms of thinking can make a decisive contribution to developing a flexible and creative educational mindset capable of responding to the challenges of the contemporary world.

The relationship between creativity and lateral thinking is a central issue in contemporary cognitive psychology, as both processes are associated with an individual's ability to generate original solutions, overcome conventional mental patterns, and reconstruct meaning in complex problem-solving contexts. Although the terms are not synonymous, their dynamics are deeply interdependent, and the specialist literature emphasises that lateral thinking is one of the essential cognitive mechanisms underlying creativity. From a comparative perspective, we can argue that, despite using different terminology, Edward de Bono, J. P. Guilford, and Arthur Koestler convey the same fundamental idea: creativity is a process that emerges from cognitive reorganisation—whether through lateral leaps [11], divergent thinking [50], bisociation [48], or associative thinking [41]. These mechanisms share mental flexibility, the ability to break away from linear thinking, and a willingness to combine

information in unexpected ways. Lateral thinking therefore plays a role in the initial stages of the creative process, particularly during idea generation. At this point, individuals need strategies that enable them to overcome cognitive blocks- an aspect also examined by Edward de Bono, who emphasised the need for the „ deliberate disruption of patterns" [10, p. 7]. This disruption is essential to managing creativity, as it creates mental space conducive to unconventional ideas. In the subsequent stages of the creative process—evaluation, selection, and development—logical thinking comes into play, demonstrating that creativity does not rely exclusively on lateral thinking but rather on a balance between lateral and vertical thinking.

Chapter 2. The Methodological Framework for Developing Students as Interpreters of Literary Works Through the Stimulation of Lateral Thinking examines the methodological foundations for developing students as interpreters of literary texts through the stimulation of lateral thinking. The analysis draws on the findings of the initial diagnostic experiment and a critical examination of Romanian language and literature textbooks intended for lower secondary education. The research aims to identify students' levels of interpretative competence, the cognitive and methodological difficulties encountered in the reception of literary texts, and the extent to which divergent-thinking strategies are integrated into current teaching practice. The study also included an analysis of four Romanian language and literature textbooks for grades V–VIII, approved at national level and published between 2017 and 2024. The main objective was to determine the extent to which these textbooks incorporate tasks designed to foster lateral thinking, interpretative creativity, and cognitive flexibility.The analysis of these teaching resources reveals a predominance of reproductive and algorithmic tasks at the expense of those with exploratory and creative potential. Although some activities can be indirectly associated with lateral thinking, they do not establish a coherent framework for developing creative interpretative competence; rather, they appear as isolated instances within the structure of the textbooks.

To assess the levels of competence and the difficulties experienced by students interpreting literary works, we conducted an initial diagnostic experiment that began in 2020 and continued until 2022. The experiment involved 80 students in grades V–VIII from the „ Explorator Teodor Gheorghe Negoiță" Lower Secondary School in Sascut: 40 students from Sascut-Sat and 40 from Păncești. In addition, 30 teachers from schools across Bacău County participated in the diagnostic experiment. The objectives were: a) to identify students' levels of competence in interpreting literary texts; b) to highlight the difficulties students encounter when comprehending and interpreting literary texts; c) to determine the extent to which teachers know and use strategies for stimulating lateral thinking in developing students as

interpreters of literary works.

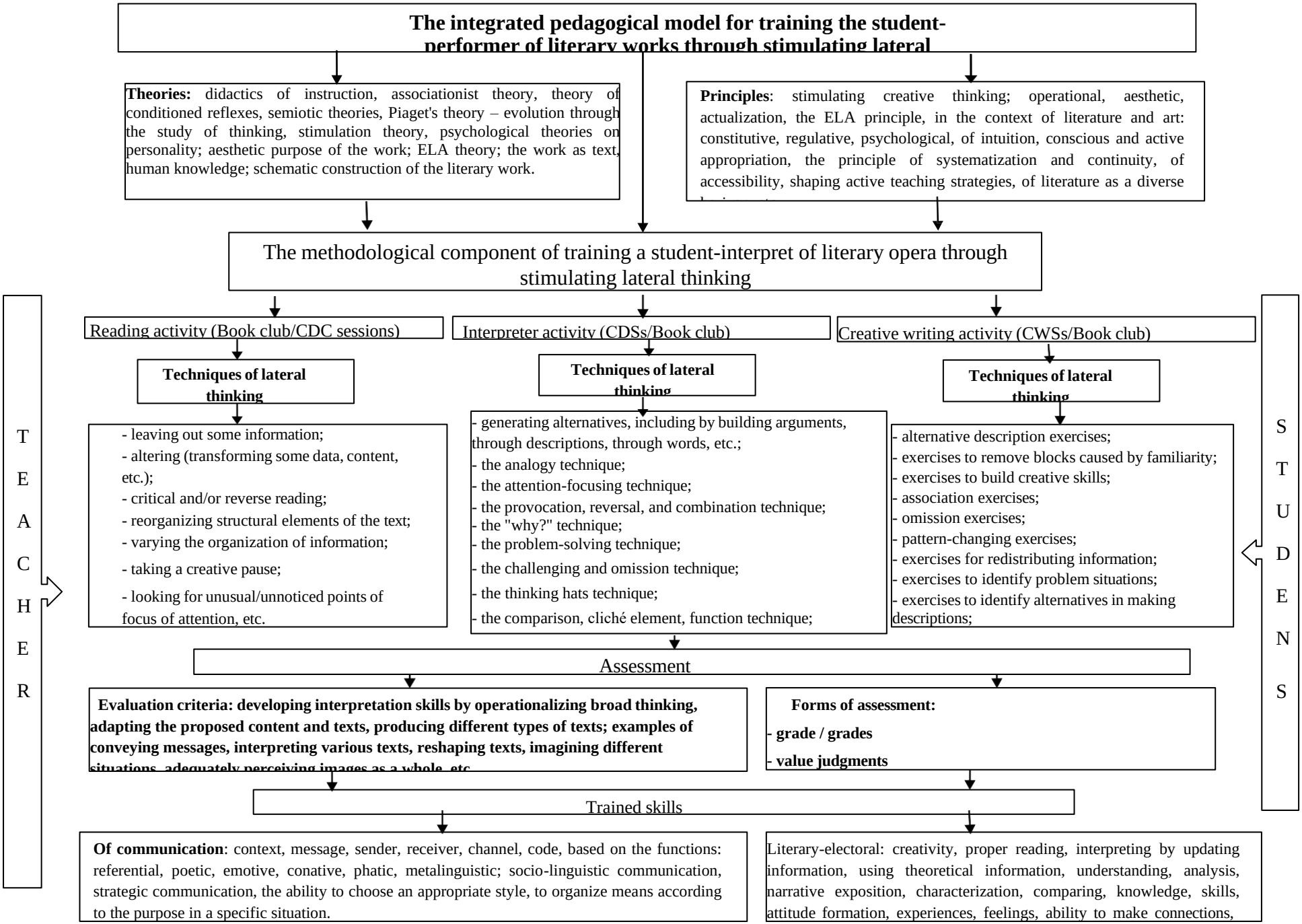
When asked to interpret particular aspects of literary texts using various lateral-thinking techniques, students' responses to the test items demonstrated that their performance was predominantly reproductive. They were able to reproduce information and explicit meanings from the texts but encountered significant difficulties when required to engage in lateral thinking. At the same time, an analysis of teachers' responses showed that, although most were familiar with the concept of lateral thinking, its practical application remained limited. The techniques mentioned by teachers were not used systematically or supported by clear methodological reasoning. Furthermore, most of the methods proposed were not specifically designed for literary studies but were general in nature and applicable across different school subjects. This discrepancy between theoretical knowledge and practical application indicates the need for stronger methodological training for teachers, as well as the explicit integration of tasks that stimulate lateral thinking into literary interpretation activities. Such measures are necessary to support the development of students' creative and critical competencies. The conclusions drawn from the diagnostic experiment led to the development of a pedagogical model for training students to interpret literary works through the stimulation of lateral thinking. The model consists of three fundamental components: The theoretical component, which includes the theories and principles underpinning the proposed approach; The methodological component, which integrates reading, interpretation, and creative-writing activities, together with techniques specific to lateral thinking; The assessment component, which encompasses the criteria, indicators, and forms of assessment used to evaluate the results obtained. Overall, the model proposes an integrated approach centred on independent discovery, cognitive flexibility, and student creativity. Its aim is to develop interpreters capable of understanding, interpreting, and communicating the meanings of literary works critically and creatively, thereby valuing both the aesthetic and the cognitive-communicative dimensions of literary texts (Figure 2.3).

Chapter 3. The Experimental Dimension of Developing Students as Interpreters of Literary Works Through the Stimulation of Lateral Thinking describes the design of the formative experiment and analyses the results obtained through the implementation of the pedagogical model, as well as those of the control experiment.

The formative experiment involved 40 students and 30 teachers from the „ Explorator Teodor Gheorghe Negoiță" Lower Secondary School in Sascut, Bacău County, and took place between 2020 and 2025. To address the research problem, we implemented a set of reading,

interpretation, and creative-writing activities comprising ten types of activities in total. These were designed in accordance with the objectives of the study and focused on stimulating lateral thinking. Each type of activity was planned and conducted using a specific strategy for stimulating lateral thinking, selected according to the intended objectives and the characteristics of the content addressed. The activities were open-ended in nature, meaning that each could be carried out over one or more sessions mong the lateral-thinking strategies applied during the activities were the following: a) Generating alternatives; b) Generating hypotheses; c) Generating alternatives by making predictions; d) Generating alternatives through description; e) Generating alternatives by increasing the complexity of a model; f) Challenging assumptions; g) Suspending judgement; h) Identifying dominant ideas and essential factors; i) Fractionation; î) Transforming favourable situations into unfavourable ones, and vice versa; k) Analogy; l) Choosing the entry point; m) Concepts, divisions, and polarisation; n) Random stimulation; o) Blockage; p) The reduction and amplification technique;r) Omission and rearrangement; s) The attention-focusing technique; ș) Thinking Hats; t) —Why?; ț) Problem description and solving, etc.

The experimental data were processed using statistical and hermeneutic methods, as well as theoretical synthesis, leading to the formulation of conclusions. The performance levels demonstrated by the students in the experimental group during and at the end of the activity involving the interpretation of the literary text „ Theseus and the Minotaur", using the technique of generating alternatives based on situations and characters (Activity No. 1), were as follows: 88% of the students were able to propose alternative ideas based on different moments in the legend's plot; 9% proposed alternative ideas but encountered difficulties in providing arguments to support them; and 3% were unable to propose alternative ideas, explaining that they agreed with the author's version (Figure 3.1).


The integrated pedagogical model for training the student-performer of literary works through stimulating lateral
Theories: didactics of instruction, associationist theory, theory of conditioned reflexes, semiotic theories, Piaget's theory – evolution through the study of thinking, stimulation theory, psychological theories on personality; aesthetic purpose of the work; ELA theory; the work as text, human knowledge; schematic construction of the literary work.
Principles: stimulating creative thinking; operational, aesthetic, actualization, the ELA principle, in the context of literature and art: constitutive, regulative, psychological, of intuition, conscious and active appropriation, the principle of systematization and continuity, of accessibility, shaping active teaching strategies, of literature as a diverse
The methodological component of training a student-interpret of literary opera through stimulating lateral thinking
TEACHER
STUDENS
Reading activity (Book club/CDC sessions)
Interpreter activity (CDSs/Book club)
Creative writing activity (CWSs/Book club)
Techniques of lateral thinking
Techniques of lateral thinking
Techniques of lateral thinking
- leaving out some information;
- altering (transforming some data, content, etc.);
- critical and/or reverse reading;
- reorganizing structural elements of the text;
- varying the organization of information;
- taking a creative pause;
- looking for unusual/unnoticed points of focus of attention, etc.
- generating alternatives, including by building arguments, through descriptions, through words, etc.;
- the analogy technique;
- the attention-focusing technique;
- the provocation, reversal, and combination technique;
- the "why?" technique;
- the problem-solving technique;
- the challenging and omission technique;
- the thinking hats technique;
- the comparison, cliché element, function technique;
- alternative description exercises;
- exercises to remove blocks caused by familiarity;
- exercises to build creative skills;
- association exercises;
- omission exercises;
- pattern-changing exercises;
- exercises for redistributing information;
- exercises to identify problem situations;
- exercises to identify alternatives in making descriptions;
Assessment
Evaluation criteria: developing interpretation skills by operationalizing broad thinking, adapting the proposed content and texts, producing different types of texts; examples of conveying messages, interpreting various texts, reshaping texts, imagining different situations, adequately perceiving images as a whole, etc.
Forms of assessment:
- grade / grades
- value judgments
Trained skills
Of communication: context, message, sender, receiver, channel, code, based on the functions: referential, poetic, emotive, conative, phatic, metalinguistic; socio-linguistic communication, strategic communication, the ability to choose an appropriate style, to organize means according to the purpose in a specific situation.
Literary-electoral: creativity, proper reading, interpreting by updating information, using theoretical information, understanding, analysis, narrative exposition, characterization, comparing, knowledge, skills, attitude formation, experiences, feelings, ability to make connections,

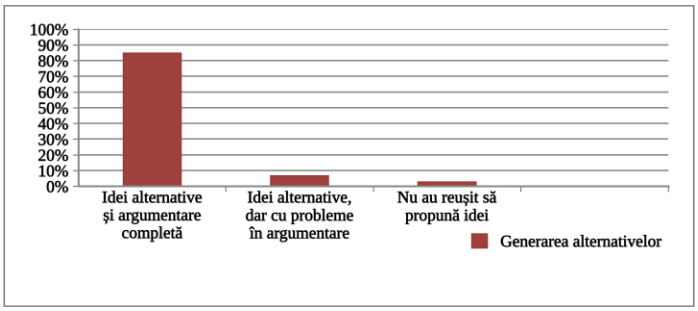


Figure 3.1: Students' ability to generate alternative ideas

The results obtained following the reading and interpretation of Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 (Activity no. 2)—in which students were asked to identify character behaviors and traits, as well as the critical situations the characters face, and subsequently to expand upon or alter these by introducing new elements (situations, character traits) intended to shift the original course of the plot—are as follows: 67% proposed alternatives and provided supporting arguments; 24% proposed alternatives but struggled with argumentation; and 9% proposed alternatives that were irrelevant to the interpretation of the text (Figure 3.2).

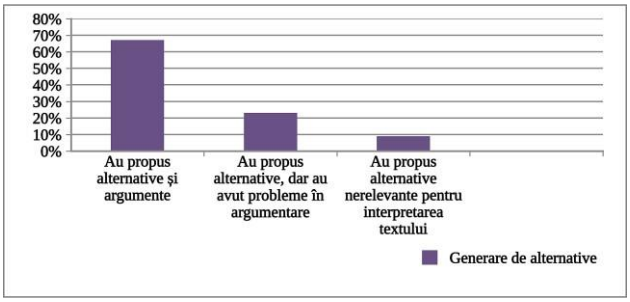


Figure 3.2. Students' ability to generate alternatives by increasing the complexity of a literary text

Focused on creative writing, Activity no. 3 highlighted the effectiveness of a technique designed to stimulate lateral thinking by introducing new, unforeseen situations into the myth of "Theseus and the Minotaur." By reinterpreting the classical myth, students devised original solutions to seemingly impossible circumstances—such as facing four Minotaurs or achieving victory through wisdom rather than relying solely on brute force. Through the use of analogy—a strategy for stimulating lateral thinking (Activity no. 4)—the goal was to develop the students' ability to map events from the myth of "Theseus and the Minotaur" onto analogous situations found in everyday life. Completing the tasks using this technique prompted various analogies: the dangerous obstacle (the Minotaur) that had to be overcome was likened to "a wild animal appearing before a person in the forest," while the struggle against the Minotaur was compared to "reacting quickly to unexpected natural events—such as a sudden storm or becoming disoriented while hiking in the mountains."

The impact of the activity involving the interpretation of I. L. Caragiale's sketch "Dl Goe"—specifically through the generation of alternatives regarding the setting (Activity 5) and the task requiring students to devise alternatives via description (Activity 6)—was significant in terms of the scenarios proposed by the students. During these activities, students demonstrated an ability to observe descriptive details, grasping how these elements shape the atmosphere and the characterization of the figures; they practiced critical and lateral thinking, and came to realize that altering a single descriptive element can shift the meaning of the entire text or the reader's perception of the protagonist and the world of the narrative. Utilizing creative writing as a tool for literary interpretation—by applying the technique of generating alternatives to transform favorable situations into unfavorable ones, and vice versa (Activity 7)—helped deepen the students' understanding of narrative structure and the relationship between the events presented and their effects on the characters. Reconfiguring specific sequences from the literary text "Căprioara" ("The Doe") by Emil Gârleanu encouraged causal analysis, the anticipation of consequences, and the exploration of potential developments in the plot. Furthermore, this approach fostered the development of cognitive flexibility and the formulation of personal interpretations, grounded in the creative restructuring of the literary work's content.

The application of the "Thinking Hats" technique (Activity no. 8) led to a significant improvement in students' ability to identify the key facts and events in the legend (increasing from 41% to 89% of students) and to express the characters' emotions (with the proportion of high-performing students rising from 20% to 60%). Furthermore, students generated an average of 3–8 creative alternatives—nearly three times as many as in the stage prior to the technique's implementation—and 78% of them formulated coherent, textually supported arguments, demonstrating their transformation into active interpreters. Comparing the results obtained before and after the application of the hypothesis-formulation technique (Activity 9) revealed a significant development in the students' interpretive skills. Specifically, the percentage of students capable of formulating reasoned personal interpretations increased from 34% to 64%, while the consistent use of textual evidence nearly doubled, rising from 31% to 69% (Figure 3.3). These data confirm the technique's effectiveness in stimulating lateral thinking and in shaping the student into an active interpreter of the literary work.

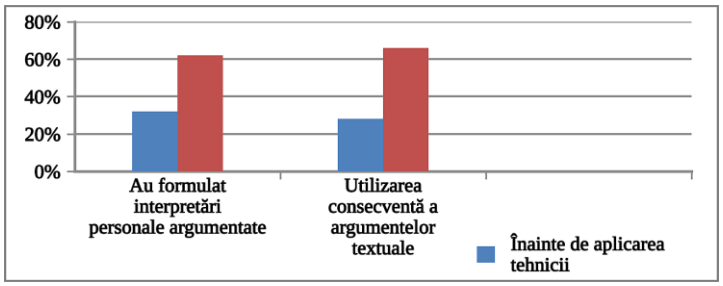


Figure 3.3. Students' results following the application of the hypothesis-formulation technique

Applying the "Why?" technique to the interpretation of the sketch D-l Goe by I. L. Caragiale (Activity no. 10) proved to be a highly formative pedagogical approach; it facilitated the students' transition from a superficial reading—focused on the comic elements and the sequence of events—to a reflective, analytical, and axiological reading. To verify the outcomes of the formative experiment, a control experiment was conducted, involving both the students from the experimental group and students from the Păncești Middle School (the control group, consisting of 40 students). This experiment aimed to determine—through the pursuit of concrete, measurable objectives that reflect both the learning process and the final outcomes—the extent to which strategies specific to lateral thinking had been successfully integrated by the students. Specifically, the objectives of the control experiment focused on: a) identifying and formulating alternative responses to situations presented in the literary text by exploring multiple interpretive perspectives; b) composing statements and texts that demonstrate creativity, flexibility, and originality of thought; c) encouraging the generation of alternative models and solutions by leveraging strategies and techniques specific to lateral thinking; d) developing the ability to construct coherent and relevant arguments to support one's own interpretations; and e) applying the principles of lateral thinking to the analysis, reorganization, and reinterpretation of literary information. f) going beyond conventional interpretations and formulating original perspectives on the literary text.

The assessment of student performance was based on clear and precise criteria designed to capture both cognitive competencies and creative interpretation: a) the capacity to explore multiple paths and perspectives to arrive at original responses to literary problems (generating alternatives); b) the aptitude to initiate change and overcome the mental block resulting from over-familiarity with literary texts (overcoming familiarity-based blocks); c) the ability to identify and apply relevant analogies to generate new ways of resolving situations within the text (analogy); d) the effective use of concepts and comparisons independent of the immediate context of the problem, in order to stimulate lateral thinking; e) the capacity to

select and pursue alternative entry points into the text, while analyzing the outcomes of these interpretive paths (entry points); f) the deliberate modification of circumstances to encourage the restructuring and reinterpretation of the text (random stimulation); g) the creation of unexpected arrangements- while deferring judgment- to allow for the emergence of innovative perspectives (the PO tool); h) the development of a new arrangement of the message to prompt a restructuring of the initial interpretive model (fractionation); i) student progress in literary interpretation skills, evaluated based on coherence, argumentation, and the ability to support original points of view. The methods used for monitoring were diverse and complementary, intended to provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the techniques applied. These included: the analysis of students' responses, direct observation of behavior during interpretive activities, the administration of questionnaires, the use of the biographical method to identify prior reading experiences, aptitude and ability tests, the conducting of experiments, and the analysis of interpretations—both through original texts created by the students and through their responses to specific tasks. Repeating the assessments ensured the validity of the results and made it possible to highlight continuous progress. Outcomes were measured using grades, qualitative ratings, and value judgments expressed by students during debates, complemented by teachers' observations regarding the students' ability to generate alternatives, apply analogies, and formulate coherent arguments. In this way, the controlled experiment provided a clear picture of how the systematic application of lateral thinking strategies contributes to the development of the student as an active interpreter of a literary work—one capable of establishing connections between textual facts, consequences, context, and potential interpretive alternatives.

Each of the three assessment tests administered to students during the controlled experiment included items requiring the interpretation of literary works through techniques that elicit lateral thinking. When the "Challenging Facts/Characters" technique was applied, students were asked to identify elements within a specific situation from the literary work that could be challenged, and to propose ways to improve or alter them (using the story of "Theseus and the Minotaur"). An analysis of the experimental group's responses revealed significant results, clearly demonstrating the effectiveness of the technique employed. Specifically, 83% of the students provided a comprehensive solution, addressing both how to manage the Minotaur—ensuring he would not be killed—and how to exempt the King of Athens from the obligation to pay tribute in the form of youths (boys and girls). 11% of the students proposed a partial solution, focusing solely on protecting the Minotaur without considering the implications for the King of Athens. 6% provided superficial responses that failed to

demonstrate a deep analysis of the situation. In contrast, the results from the control group showed a less favorable distribution: 25% of students proposed comprehensive solutions covering both aspects of the problem; 36% offered partial responses, limited to protecting the Minotaur; 22% provided superficial responses; and 17% offered no response at all—indicating a lower level of engagement and a reduced mobilization of critical thinking. These results are illustrated in Figures 3.4 and 3.5.

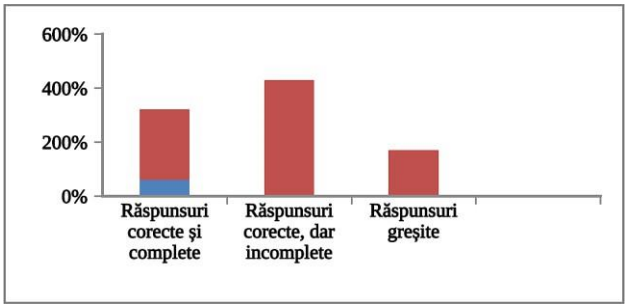


Figure 3.4. Students' ability to propose alternative behaviors for the character (experimental classes)

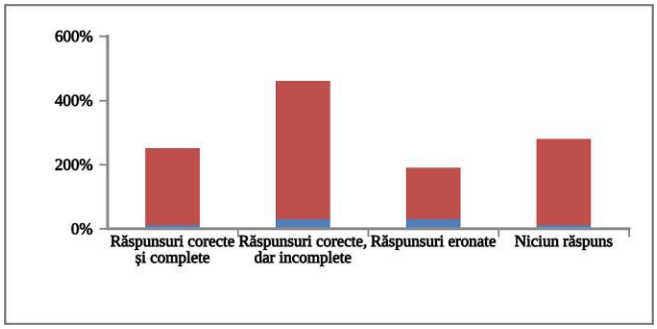


Figure 3.5. Students' ability to propose alternative behaviors for a character (control groups)

Another item assessed the students' ability to reverse character roles and construct alternative interpretations of the text. The responses from students in the experimental group demonstrated a high level of creativity, interpretive flexibility, and argumentation, whereas the versions formulated by students in the control group were characterized by the reproduction of the work's content, limited argumentation, and difficulties in restructuring narrative meanings. Statistical results confirm the effectiveness of techniques designed to stimulate lateral thinking: 78% of students in the experimental group successfully performed relevant and well-argued reversals of character roles, compared to only 23% of students in the control group. The findings, summarized in Figures 3.6 and 3.7, confirm the distinct impact that the application of lateral-thinking stimulation techniques has on the development of students as active interpreters of a literary work.

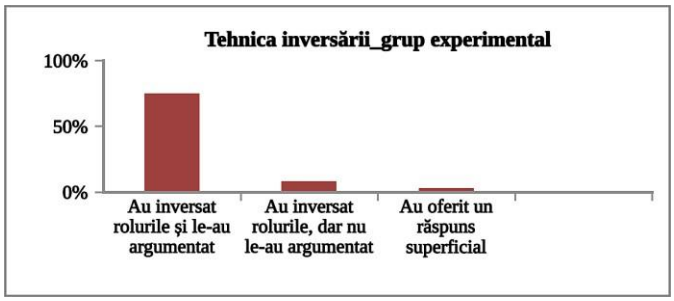


Figure 3.6. Students' ability to reverse the roles of the characters in the text "Theseus and the Minotaur"

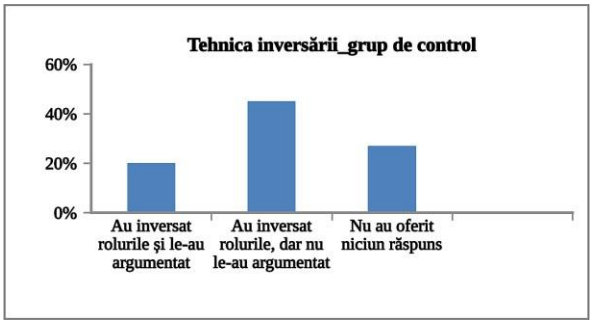


Figure 3.7. Students' ability to reverse the roles of the characters in the text "Theseus and the Minotaur"

The fourth item assessed the students' ability to combine and restructure information from the text by imagining alternative scenarios regarding the fate of Theseus, drawing upon cause-and-effect relationships and the moral implications of the characters' actions. The responses from students in the experimental group demonstrated complex, well-reasoned interpretations, whereas those from the control group remained predominantly descriptive and reproductive. These differences were also statistically confirmed by the higher percentage of complete responses recorded in the experimental group—80%—compared to 47% (Figures 3.8 and 3.9):

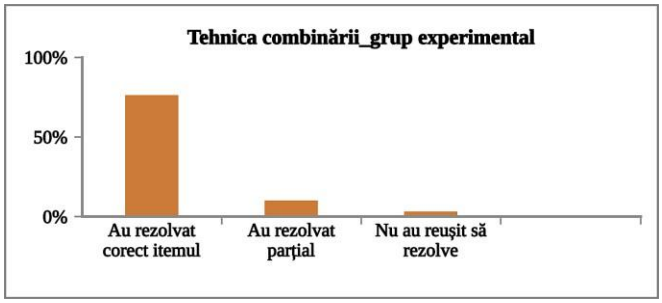


Figure 3.8. Students' ability to combine ideas and facts into a coherent whole

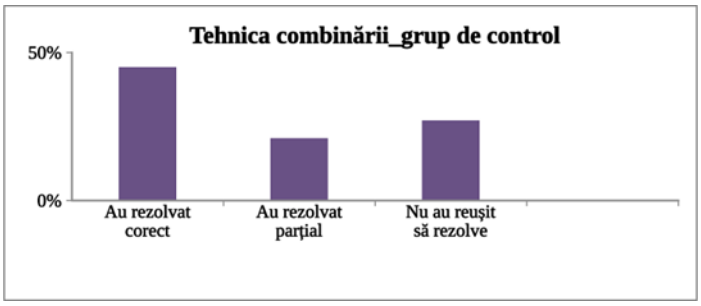


Figure 3.9. Students' ability to combine ideas and facts into a coherent whole

Using Doina Ruști's text Platanos as a starting point, students were asked to assign a character trait to Platanos that he would display upon discovering that Sisinel was in danger. They were also invited to imagine how Platanos might behave, using the Model Restructuring technique by reorganising and/or introducing new behaviours for the characters. In the experimental group, the majority of students—84%—completed the task successfully, 10% completed it partially, and 6% were unable to provide a complete response. The control group recorded the following results: 51% correct and complete responses, 24% incomplete responses, and 25% incorrect responses.

Another objective of the experiment was to assess students' ability to formulate reasoned opinions about the behaviour and decisions of literary characters. The responses provided by students in the experimental group demonstrated a higher degree of nuance and reflection. Thus, 79% of respondents in the experimental groups provided complete answers, 12% gave incomplete answers, and 9% offered vague or meaningless responses. In the control groups, only 17% provided well-developed responses, 69% gave general answers, and 14% did not provide any answer (Figures 3.10 and 3.11).

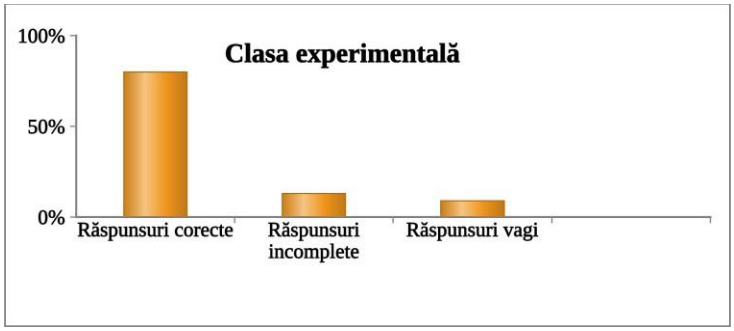


Figure 3.10. Students' ability to formulate opinions when solving a problem.

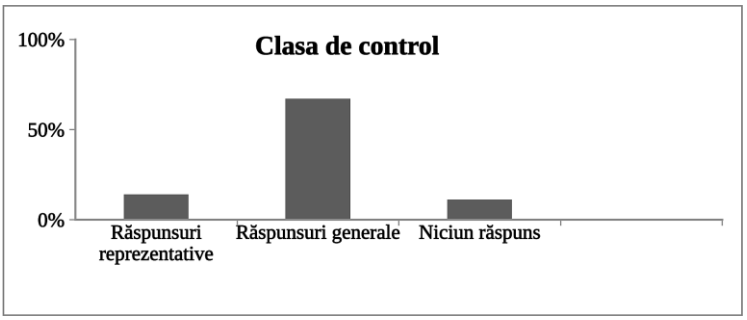


Figure 3.11. Students' ability to formulate opinions when solving a problem.

The application of the technique- Generating Alternatives by Reducing the Complexity of a Model, based on Ioan Slavici's text Popa Tanda, highlighted students' ability to identify alternative solutions for improving the behaviour of Father Trandafir. The responses provided by students in the experimental group demonstrated a thorough understanding of the relationship between the character and the community. Of these students, 82% formulated complete and creative responses, 11% provided innovative but incomplete responses, and 7% gave evasive answers that were not clearly related to the task. In the control group, only 31% of students provided complete and creative responses, 45% formulated innovative but incomplete answers, and 24% produced responses lacking coherence or relevance to the proposed task.

Regarding students' ability to generate alternatives by expanding the model or literary text, 82% of students in the experimental classes provided correct and complete answers, 12% gave correct but incomplete answers, and 6% produced insignificant responses. In the control classes, 38% provided correct and complete answers, 47% gave correct but incomplete answers, and 15% produced insignificant responses.

The application of the technique- Generating Alternatives by Omitting Information, Situations, or Elements from the Literary Work aimed to develop students' ability to reconfigure textual meanings and anticipate alternative developments in the characters' stories. Quantitatively, in the experimental classes, 83% of students formulated open-ended, coherent responses with a clear creative connection to the situation under analysis; 12% provided creative answers that were insufficiently related to the proposed problem; and 5% produced confusing responses. In the control classes, 48% of students answered with due consideration of the situation being analysed, 31% proposed seemingly creative responses without clearly relating them to the issues raised by the text, and 21% provided unclear answers. These results indicate a lower level of interpretative coherence and a reduced ability to work with alternative hypotheses.

In summary, the results of the control experiment generally demonstrate that students in the experimental group developed significantly stronger interpretative competencies than those in the control group. They demonstrated the ability to analyse, restructure, and interpret literary texts. The activities carried out with the experimental group facilitated the generation of creative alternatives, the formulation of coherent arguments, and the flexible application of critical judgement, strengthening the student's role as an active and reflective interpreter. By contrast, the control group demonstrated rigid approaches, limited to literal reading and the mechanical reproduction of the text, with a low level of cognitive and creative engagement. The statistical results confirm significant differences between the groups, highlighting the effectiveness of the techniques applied in stimulating lateral thinking and developing students' ability to anticipate consequences and demonstrate cognitive flexibility. The systematic integration of these strategies proved essential for developing literary-reading and communication competencies, providing students with the tools needed to interpret texts in innovative and well-argued ways.

The Conclusions and Recommendations section presents the scientific and methodological findings of the research. The methodological recommendations are addressed to curriculum and textbook developers, researchers and trainers in the fields of literary and artistic education, literary reception and interpretation, as well as practising teachers.

This research has addressed a highly significant scientific problem: establishing the epistemological and methodological benchmarks for developing students as interpreters of literary works through the stimulation of lateral thinking.

The main contributions of the research are summarised in the following conclusions:

1. The implementation and theoretical analysis of the concept of lateral thinking reveal its innovative character and its complementary relationship with vertical thinking. Lateral thinking is not limited to logical or sequential reasoning; rather, it involves exploring alternatives, demonstrating cognitive flexibility, and restructuring existing mental patterns in order to generate creative and original solutions. It draws on free association, intuition, and imagination, thereby contributing to the development of complex thinking capable of adapting to new situations and overcoming cognitive blocks caused by routine. Related studies and theories emphasise the importance of lateral thinking as an essential tool for stimulating creativity, exploring problems from multiple perspectives, and developing an open-minded approach that can integrate tradition and innovation.

2. Lateral thinking emerges as an essential cognitive paradigm in the process of constructing and interpreting the meaning of literary works, enabling readers to explore

multiple perspectives on a text. In literary reading, lateral thinking facilitates the decoding of implicit meanings, the reconstruction of significance, and the negotiation of interpretations by stimulating critical reflection and imagination. Comprehension thus becomes an active and interactive process in which readers engage not only in literal decoding but also in exploring multiple possibilities for understanding. Integrating this form of thinking into education supports the development of cognitive flexibility and helps prepare individuals to solve complex problems and adapt to diverse contexts.

3. The relationship between creativity and lateral thinking is one of structural interdependence. Lateral thinking is the cognitive mechanism that generates creative potential, while creativity represents the overall outcome of this process. Creativity is not merely spontaneous inspiration but the result of mental strategies grounded in flexibility, cognitive restructuring, and the ability to approach problems from alternative perspectives. Lateral thinking is therefore one of the most valuable tools for developing creative thinking across a wide range of fields, from art and science to education, management, and technological innovation. The interaction between creativity and lateral thinking constitutes a fundamental principle for designing innovative educational strategies.

4. An analysis of school textbooks, students' responses, and teaching practices documented during the diagnostic experiment reveals a significant gap between the stated curricular objectives and the realities of literary instruction. The predominance of exercises with predetermined answers and the largely reproductive nature of learning tasks limit the development of students' interpretative autonomy and cognitive flexibility. The predominantly reproductive character of students' interpretations confirms that lateral thinking is not sufficiently used as a cognitive tool in literary reading. At the same time, the discrepancy between teachers' theoretical familiarity with this concept and its methodological application points to the need to reconceptualise both initial and continuing teacher education. In this context, textbooks and teaching strategies need to be restructured to incorporate explicit open-ended, problem-based, and creative tasks that stimulate the exploration of multiple meanings and transform literary interpretation into an active, reflective, and personalised process.

5. The pedagogical model for developing students as interpreters of literary works through the stimulation of lateral thinking emerges as an integrated solution capable of addressing the limitations identified in current educational practice. By coherently bringing together theoretical foundations, pedagogical and aesthetic-literary principles, and methodological components, the model proposes a paradigm shift from passive text reception to active, creative, and

critical interpretation. Its emphasis on independent discovery, cognitive flexibility, and the use of students' personal experiences supports the functional and sustainable development of literary-reading and communication competencies. The systematic integration of strategies for stimulating lateral thinking enables not only the monitoring of progress but also the development of an authentic relationship with literary texts. Overall, the proposed model provides a solid foundation for modernising the teaching of literature and developing interpreters capable of constructing multiple meanings, communicating reflectively, and appreciating the aesthetic dimension of literary works in interaction with the cognitive and cultural demands of contemporary society.

6. The design of the formative experiment constitutes an integrated and coherent pedagogical framework aimed at developing students as active and reflective interpreters of literary works. Organising the educational process around three complementary dimensions—reading, interpretation, and creative writing—facilitates the integration of textual comprehension with the development of original perspectives, supporting the acquisition and application of complex interpretative processes. Overall, this pedagogical design promotes the development of metacognition, cognitive flexibility, and interpretative creativity, helping to develop readers who can establish relationships between meanings, contexts, and perspectives through reasoned analysis

7. The formative experiment confirms that the systematic and sustained organisation of reading, interpretation, and creative-writing activities through the exploration of lateral thinking facilitates the transformation of theoretical knowledge into functional literary-interpretation competencies. The implemented pedagogical framework, delivered through optional courses and the Reading Club, highlights the importance of continuity and coherence in developing interpretative competencies, transforming reading into an interactive, creative, and personalised process. The formative experiment further confirms the relevance of this integrated educational model, which is oriented towards intellectual autonomy and the development of transferable competencies.

8. The results of the control experiment demonstrate significant differences between the experimental and control groups, favouring the students who participated in the proposed pedagogical model. Students in the experimental group demonstrated stronger interpretative competencies, reflected in their ability to conduct in-depth analyses, restructure meanings, and formulate reasoned and original interpretations. The activities facilitated the generation of alternatives, the exercise of critical judgement, and the flexible use of interpretative perspectives, reinforcing the student's role as an active and responsible interpreter. In contrast, students in the control group demonstrated predominantly reproductive approaches centred on literal reading and the reproduction of information, with limited cognitive and creative engagement. The

statistical data confirm the effectiveness of the experimental approach in developing cognitive flexibility, the ability to anticipate outcomes, and literary-reading and communication competencies. In conclusion, the tested pedagogical model has proved relevant and effective, providing a solid basis for developing autonomous reader-interpreters capable of engaging critically and creatively with literary works from multiple perspectives.

Practical Recommendation

1. To curriculum developers and developers of curricular materials: Explicitly and progressively integrate objectives concerning the development of students as interpreters of literary works and the stimulation of lateral thinking through flexible curricular structures that support reflective reading, multiple interpretations, and student creativity.

2. To Romanian language and literature teachers: Design teaching activities centred on the active interpretation of literary texts by incorporating open-ended tasks and problem-based situations in order to stimulate lateral thinking and develop autonomous readers capable of critical reflection and creative interpretation.

3. To researchers in literary and artistic education: Further investigate the role of lateral thinking in developing interpretative competencies through empirical studies and theoretical models that highlight the relationships between creativity, literary reception, and educational performance.

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SELECTIVE LIST OF THE AUTHOR'S PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE THESIS TOPIC

I. *Articles in scientific journals:*

1. **STANCIU C.** *Developing Lateral Thinking – A Necessity for Contemporary Education*. In: Journal of Socio-Humanistic Sciences. 2021, No. 2 (48), pp. 25–31. ISSN-L 1857-0119 (category C)

2. **STANCIU C.** *Lateral Thinking as a Hermeneutic Tool in Literature*. In: The Journal of Romanian Literary Studies. Târgu-Mureș: Arhipelag XXI. ALPHA Institute for Multicultural Studies; 2026, No. 44, pp. 604–609; indexed in: CEEOL, Index Copernicus, Crossref, BASE, SSRN, LivRe, ROAD, SCILIT, WorldCat, ScienceOpen, ScienceBib, ResearchBib, ResearchGate, Academia.edu, BDD Diacronia, Google Scholar, RefSeek, JournalSeeker, Semantic Scholar, SJIF, Internet Archive, IBN, AMU Research Portal.

3. **STANCIU C.** *Understanding and Interpreting the Literary Work.* In: The Journal of Romanian Literary Studies. Târgu-Mureș: Arhipelag XXI Publishing House; ALPHA Institute for Multicultural Studies, 2026, No. 44, pp. 610–616; indexed in: CEEOL, Index Copernicus, Crossref, BASE, SSRN, LivRe, ROAD, SCILIT, WorldCat, ScienceOpen, ScienceBib, ResearchBib, ResearchGate, Academia.edu, BDD Diacronia, Google Scholar, RefSeek, JournalSeeker, Semantic Scholar, SJIF, Internet Archive, IBN, AMU Research Portal.

II. Articles in conference proceedings and other scientific event publications

1. **STANCIU C**. *The Window of Technology: Opening Up to the Stimulation of Lateral Thinking.* In: Ensuring Equal Opportunities through Educational Management and Psycho-Pedagogical Support Services in the Context of Current Challenges. Social Sciences field. Bucharest: PROUniversitaria Publishing House, May 3–5, 2023, pp. 66–72. ISBN 978-606-26-1818-6.

2. **STANCIU C.** *Innovative Techniques in Developing Lateral Thinking.* In: The Concept of the Resultant: Theoretical and Practical Importance. Proceedings of the National Scientific Conference with International Participation, 5th Edition, December 1–2, 2023. Chișinău: —

Ion Creangă‖ State Pedagogical University, 2024. pp. 171–175. ISBN 978-9975-46-884-8

3. **STANCIU C.** *Strategies for Stimulating Lateral Thinking in the Interpretation of Literary Works, Including School-Developed Curriculum (CDȘ).* In: Science and Education: New Approaches and Perspectives. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference, March 21–22, 2024, Series XXVI, Vol. 3. Chișinău: "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University, 2024, pp. 66–73. ISBN 978-9975-46-943-2

4. **STANCIU C.** *Pedagogical Cohesion: Contemporary Requirements and Development Perspectives.* In: Pedagogical Research: Contemporary Requirements and Development Perspectives. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference, November 3–4, 2023. Chișinău: "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University, 2023, pp.137–143. ISBN 978-9975-46-867-1

5. **STANCIU C.** *Extending Strategies Specific to Lateral Thinking for the Development of the Student as an Interpreter of Literary Texts.* In: Research. Innovation. Development. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference, April 19, 2024. Chișinău: "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University, Vol. II, 2024, pp. 163–169, ISBN 978-9975-48-207-3

6. **STANCIU C.** *The History of Lateral Thinking and an Exploration of Its Necessity in Both the Present and the Future.* In: Psychological Security in Children During Times of Crisis. Proceedings of the National Scientific Conference with International Participation, June 22, 2023. Chișinău: "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University, 2022, pp. 62–66, ISBN 978-9975-46-824-4

7. **STANCIU C.** *Comprehension and Interpretation of Literary Works.* In: Higher Education: Traditions, Values, Perspectives. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference, September 29–30, 2023. Chișinău: "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University, 2023, Vol. 1, pp. 296–302,
ISBN 978-9975-46-816-9

8. **STANCIU C.** *Creativity, Lateral Thinking, Methods, and Innovative Technology: Pillars for Enhancing Lesson Effectiveness*. In: Education from the Perspective of the "Classroom of the Future" Concept. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference, November 4–5, 2022. Chișinău: "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University, 2022, pp. 53–61. ISBN 978-9975-46-681-3

ANNOTATION

Stanciu Carmen

Thesis structure: Introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, 206 bibliographic references, 27 appendices, 152 pages of main text, 37 figures, and 8 tables.

Publications on the topic of the thesis: Publications on the thesis topic: 19 scientific publications, including 3 articles in indexed journals, 8 international and 2 national conference papers, 4 county-level conference papers, and 2 county-level curricula.

Keywords: literary interpreter, literary work, education, lateral thinking, lateral thinking techniques, reading club, interpretation, creative writing, communication, literary reading competencies.

Research aim: To provide a theoretical and practical-experimental foundation for a methodology aimed at developing students' ability to interpret literary works through the stimulation of LT.

Research objectives: Research objectives: To establish the conceptual framework for developing students' abilities through lateral thinking (LT); assess their literary competence and LT development before the experiment; design and validate the pedagogical model; and formulate conclusions and recommendations.

Scientific novelty and originality: The study establishes the theoretical foundations of and validates a pedagogical model that employs lateral thinking development techniques in reading, literary interpretation, and creative writing activities.

Scientific problem addressed: The theoretical grounding, development, and experimental validation of a methodology for developing students' ability to interpret literary works through reading, interpretation, and creative writing activities employing lateral thinking stimulation techniques, thereby contributing to the development of competent readers.

Scientific innovation and theoretical value: The research clarifies key concepts, including „recipient", „literary interpreter", „literary competence" and „lateral thinking" and provides a theoretical foundation for the methodology of developing students literary interpretation skills.

Practical value: The research provides a pedagogical model, identifies priorities for improving reader development through lateral thinking, and offers recommendations for modernizing initial and continuing teacher education in literary and artistic education.

Implementation of the scientific results: The results were implemented as part of a pedagogical training experiment conducted during the 2020–2025 academic years at the — Explorator Teodor Gheorghe Negoiță Lower Secondary School in Sascut, Bacău County, Romania.

STANCIU CARMEN

DEVELOPING THE STUDENT AS AN INTERPRETER OF LITERARY WORKS THROUGH THE STIMULATION OF LATERAL THINKING

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