

ACTIVE PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES TO TEACHING ROMANIAN

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ABSTRACT

Implementing the goals, principles, and especially of the contents of the educational system – a fundamental component of the educational process – is fully determined by the elaboration and the creative applying of didactic strategies, technologies, and methodologies.

The educational activity is put into practice with the help of certain methods and processes, by resorting to technical means, and where the results are verified and assessed through a system of specific strategies. Between the building blocks of the didactic process an interdependent relationship can be established, in which didactic methods are particularly important, as they are knowledge processes, as well as processes of scientific investigation, of documentation and even applied experimental processes, which ensure the scientific foundation of all teaching and learning actions.

Key words: methods, teaching, learning, educational process.

INTRODUCTION

Educational methods are elaborated and applied in close connection with the various components of the educational process – didactic goals, contents, means, and forms of organising – and with the many types of the didactic activities. Some methods are better suited to the activity of teaching staff, such as teaching, lecturing, conversing, while others contribute better to student-specific activities, such as studying, reading, exercise solving, etc. Given the ends of the educational process, it is necessary for all methods to contribute to successfully accomplishing both teaching and learning.

For special results to be achieved through teaching and learning, teachers must combine and adequately and creatively use the didactic methods.

Romanian language and literature is a subject whose studying forms general and specific skills, and whose ends consist of forming

integrative skills for correct oral expression and reception, intellectual skills, cultural representations, setting basic rules and models for written and oral communication, as well as internalising methods and techniques for intellectual work. If a lesson in Romanian language and literature is a didactic unit structured into teaching, learning, and evaluating, following a strategy obeying educational logic and with formative effects on the student, the methodology of teaching involves the forming of skills and abilities.

There are many ways to make the educational process more dynamic, especially since the methods for teaching and studying have evolved, as has human knowledge, with students displaying a preference for interactive, participatory and collaborative methods, focused on the student, over those focused on the teacher.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The methods used in this study were diverse: the historical method, the comparative method, the sociological method, the logical method and the analytical one, their aim was the systematic analysis of the information selected from the sources studied in order to develop personal points of view and conclusions about the stated objectives.

Participatory methods are much more effort-intensive for those involved in the act of teaching, as they require of the teacher a great number of hours to prepare (investments of time and designing effort), unlike classical methods, which are much more passive and more relaxing. This is why teachers should have multiple ways of approaching a lesson, seeing how the school type of participatory studying is different to the home one, which is individual and reflexive.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Interactive approaches and turning content into games can emphasise certain not particularly important information, but some information can be lost due to the impossibility of integrating it with the lesson. Therefore, active participatory methods must be used cautiously and certainly not ignored, since they render the learning process more dynamic and they motivate students.

Within the framework of didactic activity, the teachers propose multiple objectives through which they try to anticipate the performance levels the students will be capable of at the end of a learning unit. Relative to the predetermined goals, the teachers will

decide on the methods and means they consider to be the most efficient, while the goals pursued are clear and concise, aiming for explicitly stated behavioural actions.

One may consider the way in which any informational content may be internalised by students, and the methods to be used, thereby establishing an unbreakable bond between content and method, and thus adequate strategies must be chosen for each informational message. Any student can be taught essentially anything, as long as the adequate methods are used, which underscores the trade-off between methods and contents.

The methods must be chosen depending on a series of psycho-social factors related to student development or to the relationships developed within that class: cooperation, competition, school group homogeneity. Using teaching/learning strategies may lead to shaping certain personality traits. It has been noted that the same method, when used by different teachers, may lead to different results, taken into account psychopedagogic training, professional skill, career interest, and the teacher's moral standing and didactic experience. Thus, one may notice that a method is an instrument whose effectiveness can be influenced by the teacher's didactic style, and which consists in forging the student's personality. Between the methods used during teaching and those based on which evaluation is achieved, it is truly necessary that a direct and interdependent connexion be established – teaching via strategies entailing evaluation through traditional means, while using interactive strategies for teaching warrants evaluation methodology based on referrals.

Regarding conventional classification, teaching methods form a coherent educational system displaying certain characteristics but also specific implications, providing the possibility of realising certain typologies, i.e. emphasising diversity within the didactic methodological set. The following types may then be mentioned:

classic (traditional) methods, whose importance has been significantly diminished, as all these old methods – such as: *oral presentation, conversation, reading (book studying), intuitive demonstration* – have integrated new, modern elements, such as *dialogue, experimentation, demonstration through audio-video means*, etc.

modern methods, such as: *discovery and problematisation, simulation, cooperation, modelling, brainstorming, case studies*, can no longer be considered modern anymore, as they have been integrated as common methods of the teaching/learning process.

Thus, the didactic methodology represents the total set of all methods and didactic processes that the teacher can resort to in order to fulfill the proposed educational goals.

Compliant with modern didactic principles, there is increasing credit given to the concept of turning the student into a *subject* of the teaching process and of the student's active involvement in accomplishing the process. As students exhibit individual particularities differentiating among one another, it is necessary to use a set of teaching/learning methods that would reveal and capitalise on their potential. Thus, teachers also get the opportunity to know and use a variety of methods and processes to reach the projected educational objectives.

Active participatory didactic methods are methods based on action, where it is less important that you learn in order to know but to learn in order to take action.

The exercise consists of: the understanding and concrete application of various learned rules, notions, principles and theories; the active repeating of certain structures with the aim of internalising them as fully as possible; the consolidation of knowledge and learned abilities; the development of creativity, etc.

Exercises must be active, providing students with the possibility to apply their gained knowledge into various contexts, while conditions regarding its efficientisation may be: securing the students' interest and respecting their and the exercises' particularities; diverse exercises, independently executed by students; adhering to the principles of: simple-complex, easy-difficult, slow-fast; immediate and aware (self-)control of the learned information; the adequate time distribution of the exercises.

Projects, theoretical or practical works, are research papers aimed at attaining a well-defined goal; the variety of project themes is given by the complexity of the relationship between studying, designing, and researching. The method, on its own, is of particular formative value.

The case study enables the confrontation with authentic situations, which may be taken as typical examples, and then generalised. The case must be carefully selected, such that it may aid students with lesson preparation, and the case's difficulty degree must be appropriate to the students' abilities.

Cooperative studying occurs when students, working in pairs or groups, do an experiment, solve a problem, analyse a literary text or take part in the creation of an original product.

Report sheet method aims to sequence the informational content by one or several questions: each question is written down on a sheet,

which enables and ensures the individual nature of the learning process. There are several types of sheet: exercise, knowledge, development, recovery, control.

The main advantage of the active participatory methods is the students' involvement in the didactic activity, the forming of their abilities to express opinions and value judgments, based on diverse viewpoints on the studied subject. Thus, students will develop their critical thinking, focused around the testing and assessing of possible solutions for a given situation, which is then followed by supportive arguments.

Some of the most important methods for developing creative thinking are:

I KNOW/I WANT TO KNOW/I HAVE LEARNED: the first column includes the recording of knowledge held by the students on the discussed topic; in the second, students will mention their expectations on the given topic; in the third they must write down what they have learned.

THINK/WORK IN TEAMS/COMMUNICATE: organise students into pairs; give them the work task; they solve it individually in 4-5 minutes; read/listen to their answers in pairs, provide solutions and suggestions mutually applicable; request a few groups to present their results.

The SINELG method – the interactive marking system for rendering critical reading and thinking more efficient, it aims to get the students actively involved into learning: they write down all they know on the topic, whether correct or not; everything written will be read, with the teacher writing it down on the board; inconsistencies are analysed, and only the important parts are kept; students are given a text on the given topic, signalling via graphic symbols:

A *confirmation of what is known*

+ *new information*

- *information that is different to what they*

knew

? *not understood*, then there is a debate on the

given topic, and a 4-column table is made on the board.

THE "JIGSAW METHOD" promotes learning through cooperation, namely teamwork, and it consists of: make groups of 4-5 students, each group getting a number; the text is divided into 4-5 fragments and students are given 4-5 tasks; expert groups are formed, and they research for it individually, and talk among themselves to find the most efficient way to teach the others in the initial groups; they return

to their initial groups and each part is taught by the experts (the teacher helps, intervenes, and monitors).

THE CUBE emphasises the thinking activities involved in solving a learning task: form 6 work teams made up of 4-5 students, who must write down on a cube, based on a lesson they have studied, several ideas or words, according to clearly determined instructions: Describe, Compare, Associate, Analyse, Apply, Argue. The time for solving the tasks is given, and all given answers will be debated at the board.

KEYWORDS are the so-called *anchor* bits of knowledge that aim to refresh previous knowledge related to the lesson and stimulate motivation and interest, helping students establish benchmarks and objectives regarding learning.

The teacher opts for 4-5 keywords, or *anchor concepts*, which they write down on the board; students, in teams, talk about the relationships between the given terms for 5 minutes; they are provided with the reading method and requested to note the similarities between what they have discussed and reality proper.

"GALLERY TOUR" is a method for learning through collaboration, encouraging students to freely express their opinions, find interesting solutions to the given problems. Working teams of 4-5 students are formed, and they get differentiated tasks; after 7-10 minutes, each student must produce a plan or *scenario*; once they have finished, students move to another task, thus permutating through workgroups; eventually, all plans are displayed, each with a *scenario* per task.

CONCLUSION

We may conclude that teaching methods and methodology are a particularly important component, consisting of adequate means, processes, techniques for instruction, which ensure the efficient execution and finalisation of the teaching/learning process.

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