The Use of Graphic Organizers in Teaching Romanian Language and Literature in Primary School

Călin Iuliana[1]

Abstract: Teaching Romanian language and literature in primary school involves the use of modern, student-centered teaching strategies that facilitate understanding, processing and applying information. Graphic organizers are effective visual tools that support active learning and the development of communication skills. This article analyzes the role of graphic organizers in teaching Romanian language and literature at primary school level, highlighting their types, the benefits of their use and concrete ways of integrating them into teaching. The study emphasizes the importance of graphic organizers in developing logical thinking, the ability to analyze and synthesize, as well as in adapting the educational process to the age characteristics of students.

Keywords: graphic organizers; Romanian language and literature; primary education; teaching strategies; active learning

1. Introduction

Primary education is the fundamental stage in the formation of students' basic skills, constituting the premise of subsequent school success. The Romanian Language and Literature discipline plays a central role in this process, contributing to the development of oral and written communication skills, critical thinking and the capacity for creative expression.

---

[1] Senior Lecturer, Danubius International University of Galați, Romania, Address: 3 Galati Blvd., Galați 800654, Romania, Corresponding author: iulianacalin@univ-danubius.ro

In the current context, characterized by the diversity of learning styles and the need to adapt the teaching approach to the individual needs of students, teachers are called upon to use innovative strategies that stimulate the active participation of students. Graphic organizers fall into this category of modern methods, having a positive impact on the understanding and structuring of information.

2. Graphic Organizers – Theoretical Benchmarks

Graphic organizers are visual teaching tools used to structure, organize and relate information, with the role of supporting the cognitive processes involved in learning. They facilitate the understanding of concepts, clarify the relationships between ideas and consolidate knowledge, being adapted to the level of intellectual development of primary school students.

From a pedagogical perspective, graphic organizers fall into the category of active learning strategies, as they involve students directly in the process of building knowledge. Their use favors the transition from passive learning, based on memorization, to meaningful learning, focused on understanding and application. According to constructivist principles, students learn more effectively when they can visualize information and establish connections between new acquisitions and previous knowledge.

Graphic organizers can be used at all stages of the lesson: in the attention-grabbing stage, to activate prior knowledge, in the teaching stage, to structure new information, as well as in the consolidation and evaluation stage, for synthesis and self-evaluation. This versatility turns them into a valuable teaching tool, easy to integrate into the instructional-educational approach.

In the primary cycle, the visual and intuitive nature of graphic organizers corresponds to the age characteristics of students, who learn more effectively through images, schemes and concrete representations. Graphic organizers contribute to the development of logical thinking, the ability to analyze and synthesize, as well as to the formation of communication skills, being successfully used in teaching the Romanian language and literature.

Through graphic organizers, students are supported to identify the main ideas of a text, to observe the relationships between characters, events or linguistic concepts and to structure their own oral and written discourse. Thus, graphic organizers are

not just a visual support, but an effective means of optimizing the teaching-learning process, adapted to the requirements of modern education.

Types of Graphic Organizers used in Teaching Romanian Language and Literature

Within the Romanian Language and Literature discipline, graphic organizers can be adapted to various content and teaching objectives. Among the most frequently used are:

Concept Maps

Concept maps are a type of graphic organizer used to structure and visually represent concepts and the relationships between them. They are based on the principles of meaningful learning, facilitating the organization of knowledge in a logical and coherent manner. Through concept maps, information is presented in the form of key concepts, connected by lines or arrows, which highlight the relationships between them.

In the teaching-learning process, concept maps can be used both as a teaching tool and as a means of consolidating and evaluating knowledge. They support students in identifying main ideas, in establishing connections between concepts and in logically organizing information. In the primary cycle, concept maps are adapted to the level of cognitive development of students, having a simplified and intuitive character.

The use of concept maps in teaching Romanian language and literature contributes to the development of communication and critical thinking skills. In the analysis of literary texts, they can be used to synthesize the content, highlight characters and the relationships between them or to identify the structural elements of the text. In teaching grammatical notions, concept maps facilitate the classification and systematization of parts of speech, grammatical categories and rules of language use.

Also, concept maps favor differentiated learning, offering students the opportunity to build their own graphic representations, depending on the pace and style of learning. This method contributes to the development of autonomy in learning and to the stimulation of creativity, transforming the student into an active participant in the educational process.

Due to their visual and organized nature, concept maps prove to be an effective teaching tool in the primary cycle, supporting the deep understanding of the contents and facilitating the transfer of knowledge in new learning contexts.

In the teaching activity carried out at the primary cycle level, concept maps were frequently used as support tools for understanding and consolidating the specific contents of the Romanian Language and Literature subject. They were adapted to the age level of the students and progressively integrated into the teaching approach.

A first example is the use of the concept map in the study of the narrative text. During the reading lessons, the students created, under the guidance of the teacher, a concept map with the title of the text studied as its central element. Key concepts such as: characters, time, place, main events and the message of the text were placed around it. This activity facilitated the overall understanding of the text and supported the students in formulating answers to the comprehension questions.

Another example of the practical application of concept maps is found in teaching parts of speech. For the notion of noun, students built a concept map that included the definition, classification, examples and the role of the noun in the sentence. This visual representation contributed to the systematization of knowledge and its fixation in an accessible and attractive manner.

Concept maps were also used in character characterization activities. Students created concept maps with the character's name at the center, and around it were noted physical traits, moral traits, significant facts and relationships with other characters. This method supported the understanding of direct and indirect characterization and stimulated coherent oral and written expression.

During the review activities, concept maps were used as synthesis tools. Students had the opportunity to complete concept maps individually or in groups, thus consolidating the knowledge acquired. This approach favored collaboration, the exchange of ideas and the development of critical thinking.

Teaching experience has shown that the constant use of concept maps contributes to increasing students' interest in learning activities, improving the ability to organize information and developing autonomy in learning. By integrating them into the teaching activity, the teaching staff can facilitate efficient learning adapted to the needs of primary school students.

Venn Diagrams

Venn diagrams are a type of graphic organizer used to highlight the similarities and differences between two or more concepts, objects, characters or texts. They play an important role in the development of logical thinking and the ability to make

comparative analyses, being frequently used in the instructional-educational process in the primary cycle.

From a didactic point of view, Venn diagrams are constructed in the form of intersecting circles, each circle representing an element subject to analysis, and the area of intersection indicating common characteristics. This visual representation facilitates the understanding of the relationships between concepts and supports students in organizing and structuring information.

In teaching Romanian language and literature, Venn diagrams can be successfully used in activities of comparing characters, literary texts or types of texts. By completing them, students are encouraged to identify specific and common features, to formulate pertinent observations and to argue their own opinions. Thus, Venn diagrams contribute to the development of communication and critical thinking skills.

The use of Venn diagrams in the primary cycle is justified by their intuitive and visual character, adapted to the age level of the students. They can be completed individually, in pairs or in groups, promoting collaboration and the exchange of ideas. Venn diagrams can also be used both in teaching and consolidation activities, as well as in formative assessment, providing the teacher with relevant information about the level of understanding of the students.

By constantly integrating Venn diagrams into teaching, the teaching-learning process becomes more attractive and efficient, and students acquire essential skills of analysis, synthesis and argumentation, necessary for their subsequent educational journey.

In primary school teaching practice, Venn diagrams have proven to be effective tools for developing students' logical thinking and comparative analysis skills. They have been used both in teaching and in consolidation and evaluation activities.

A concrete example is the analysis of the characters of a narrative text. In third grade, students can complete a Venn diagram to compare two main characters. Each circle represents a character, and the intersection area highlights common traits. In separate circles, the distinctive traits of each character will be noted, including physical, moral and behavioral aspects. This activity facilitates the understanding of direct and indirect characterization and stimulates coherent, oral and written expression.

Another example involves comparing text types or literary genres. Students could create Venn diagrams to highlight the similarities and differences between a story and a legend, or between a narrative and a descriptive text. The intersection areas

will be used for common features, such as the presence of characters or the existence of a main action, and the separate circles will include the specific elements of each text type. This method contributes to the development of analysis and synthesis skills and to the consolidation of knowledge about the structure and peculiarities of literary texts. Venn diagrams can also be integrated into review and assessment activities. Students complete diagrams to compare previously studied stories or to identify similarities and differences between characters in several texts. These activities stimulate collaboration between students, the exchange of ideas and the ability to argue, while providing the teacher with a formative assessment tool.

Teaching experience shows that the constant use of Venn diagrams contributes to increasing students' interest and motivation for learning, developing critical thinking and strengthening autonomy in learning. By integrating these graphic organizers into everyday activity, the educational process becomes more attractive, more efficient and adapted to the needs of primary school students.

Tables

Tables are a type of graphic organizer used to structure and present information in an orderly and systematic way. They allow for the comparison, classification and organization of data, highlighting the relationships between concepts and facilitating the understanding of didactic content. In the teaching of Romanian language and literature, tables are a valuable tool for consolidating knowledge and for the development of logical and analytical thinking.

From a pedagogical perspective, tables support the cognitive processes of classifying and ranking information. They offer students the opportunity to simultaneously visualize several aspects of a concept or phenomenon, which contributes to the sustainable fixation of knowledge. In the primary cycle, tables are adapted to the level of development of students, presenting information in a clear, simplified and accessible way.

Tables can be used in various teaching activities: for analyzing literary characters, for comparing types of texts, for synthesizing the stages of a narrative or for organizing grammatical notions, such as parts of speech and rules of language use. They offer students a stable visual framework, which supports the understanding of the relationships between the elements studied and facilitates coherent expression, both oral and written.

In addition, tables favor differentiated learning, as they can be completed individually, in pairs or in groups, adapting the level of complexity to the learning pace and needs of each student. They are also effective in assessment activities, allowing the teacher to verify both the knowledge acquired and the students' ability to organize and synthesize information.

Due to their visual and structured nature, tables represent a practical and versatile teaching tool, which significantly contributes to increasing the efficiency of the teaching-learning process and to the development of fundamental skills of students in the primary cycle.

Narrative Schemes

Narrative schemes are a type of graphic organizer used to visually represent the structure of a narrative text. They allow for highlighting the stages of the subject – exposition, plot, development of the action, climax and denouement – and facilitate understanding of the sequence of events, as well as the causal relationships between them. Narrative schemes support the learning process by providing a clear and intuitive visual framework, adapted to the age characteristics of primary school students.

From a didactic perspective, narrative schemes help students organize information from a text in a logical and coherent way, thus developing analysis and synthesis skills. They can be used both in the teaching stage, to explain the narrative structure, and in consolidation and evaluation activities, to verify the degree of understanding of the text. Through narrative schemes, students can identify key moments of the action, the relationships between characters and their effects on the development of the story.

In teaching the Romanian language and literature, narrative schemes are versatile tools, used for:

• analyzing literary texts;

• chronological organization of events;

• comparing the actions and decisions of characters;

• supporting coherent oral and written expression.

Narrative schemes also facilitate differentiated learning, being adaptable to the level of understanding and pace of work of each student. They allow students to visualize

the connections between text elements, supporting the development of logical thinking, analytical skills, and creativity.

Through the constant use of narrative schemes in teaching activities, the teaching-learning process becomes more structured, clearer and more attractive, contributing to the consolidation of students' fundamental skills and increasing their interest in the study of the Romanian language and literature.

The role of graphic organizers in the development of communication skills

The use of graphic organizers supports the development of skills in receiving and producing oral and written messages. Students learn to select essential information, organize it logically and use it in various communication contexts.

Graphic organizers play an essential role in the development of communication skills of primary school students, facilitating both the reception and production of oral and written messages. By visually representing information, they support the process of structuring ideas and allow students to understand more clearly the relationships between concepts, events or characters.

In reading and text analysis activities, graphic organizers help students identify main ideas, highlight key elements and formulate coherent answers to comprehension questions. For example, concept maps allow students to synthesize information in a visual and organized way, while narrative schemes help them to reproduce the sequence of events and correctly relate the content of a text.

The use of Venn diagrams and tables contributes to the development of the ability to compare and contrast, facilitating the expression of arguments and the support of opinions. Students are encouraged to clearly communicate the differences and similarities identified, thus developing oral and written expression skills, as well as critical thinking. In addition, graphic organizers support collaboration and communication between students. Activities carried out in groups or pairs, in which students complete concept maps, diagrams or tables together, stimulate dialogue, the exchange of ideas and the negotiation of solutions. This interaction contributes to the development of social and communicative skills, essential for active learning and for adapting to various educational contexts.

When studying a narrative text in the third or fourth grade, the teacher can use a narrative scheme to identify the moments of the subject. For the characterization of the characters, a table with physical and moral traits facilitates the understanding of direct and indirect characterization.

In teaching grammatical notions, concept maps contribute to clarifying and consolidating knowledge, being useful both in frontal activities and in individual or group activities.

Teaching experience demonstrates that students who regularly use graphic organizers in the learning process develop clearer and more coherent expression, structure their logical thinking and learn to communicate effectively with both teachers and colleagues. Thus, the integration of graphic organizers in daily teaching-learning activities contributes significantly to the consolidation of communication skills, being a valuable teaching tool in the primary cycle.

Graphic organizers also contribute to vocabulary development, improve coherent expression and develop argumentation skills, being effective tools in differentiated learning.

Graphic organizers and active learning

Graphic organizers are effective teaching tools for promoting active learning, as they involve students directly in the process of knowledge construction. By using them, students are no longer simple recipients of information, but become active participants, which facilitates understanding, retention and application of knowledge.

Active learning involves students engaging in practical, exploratory, and reflective activities in which they analyze, compare, synthesize, and organize information. Graphic organizers, such as concept maps, Venn diagrams, tables, or narrative schemes, provide visual and methodological support for these processes, stimulating critical thinking and creativity. In primary school, graphic organizers facilitate active learning by: structuring and visualizing information (students can observe relationships between concepts, narrative moments, or character characteristics), creating their own visual representations (students actively contribute to the development of maps, schemes, or tables, developing autonomy in learning), analyzing and synthesizing information (by completing graphic organizers, students learn to extract main ideas and organize them logically), collaboration and communication (group activities in which students complete graphic organizers stimulate dialogue, exchange of ideas, and argumentation of opinions).

The application of graphic organizers in active learning activities allows adapting tasks to the needs and pace of each student, providing support to students with difficulties and additional challenges to high-achieving students. This method

contributes to creating a motivating, interactive and inclusive educational environment.

Teaching experience demonstrates that students involved in active learning activities, supported by graphic organizers, acquire stronger communication, analysis and synthesis skills and develop critical and creative thinking skills. Thus, graphic organizers become essential tools in the modern teaching-learning process, centered on the student and on the development of transversal skills.

By using graphic organizers, students become active participants in the learning process. They are involved in building their own knowledge, which leads to sustainable and meaningful learning.

Activities based on graphic organizers favor collaboration, communication and reflection, contributing to the development of social and emotional skills.

Advantages of using graphic organizers in primary school

The main benefits of using graphic organizers are:

• increasing the level of understanding of the contents;

• stimulating critical and creative thinking;

• facilitating differentiated learning;

• developing autonomy in learning;

• adapting teaching to the needs and pace of primary school students.

3. Conclusions

Graphic organizers are a valuable teaching tool in teaching Romanian language and literature in primary school. Their integration into teaching contributes to the efficiency of the teaching-learning process, supporting the development of students' communication and thinking skills. The constant use of graphic organizers promotes active, sustainable learning adapted to the requirements of modern education.

Bibliography

Cerghit, I. (2006). *Teaching methods*. Polirom.

Cucoș, C. (2014). *Pedagogy*. Polirom.

Joița, E. (2008). *Constructivist instruction*. Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House.

Oprea, C. L. (2010). *Interactive teaching strategies*. Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House.

Pânișoară, I.-O. (2015). *The successful teacher*. Polirom.

Ministry of Education. (2014). *School curriculum for Romanian language and literature, primary education*.