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MODAL HYPERTEXT – AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING, DIGITAL AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Viorica GORAŞ-POSTICĂ, Lucica CROITORU,
Moldova State University

Vocational education is increasingly relevant due to its ability to quickly train qualified specialists within just three years of schooling. The educational process needs a renewal in teaching-learning-assesment using new technologies, as a request to the labor market. This study proposes an experimental approach based on modal hypertext, a cross-curricular digital tool designed to develop students' reading, digital, and professional competencies. The research highlights the necessity of integrating ICT tools and multimodal texts into vocational education to stimulate student engagement, facilitate interdisciplinary learning, and bridge urban-rural educational gaps. Statistical analyses confirm modal hypertext significantly improves students' overall competencies, reduces absenteeism, and supports teachers' digital proficiency.

Keywords**:** *vocational education, reading competence, professional competence, digital competence, modal hypertext.*

HIPERTEXTUL MODAL – O ABORDARE INOVATIVĂ ÎN DEZVOLTAREA COMPETENȚELOR LECTORALE, DIGITALE ŞI PROFESIONALE ÎN ÎNVĂŢĂMÂNTUL PROFESIONAL

Învățământul profesional devine tot mai relevant datorită capacității sale de a forma rapid specialiști calificați în doar trei ani de școlarizare. Pentru a satisface cerințele pieței muncii, procesul educațional impune o regândire a metodelor de predare-învățare-evaluare adaptate noilor tehnologii. Acest studiu propune o abordare experimentală bazată pe hipertextul modal, un instrument digital transcurricular conceput pentru dezvoltarea competențelor lectorale, digitale și profesionale ale elevilor. Cercetarea subliniază necesitatea integrării instrumentelor TIC și a textelor multimodale în educația profesională pentru a stimula implicarea elevilor, a facilita învățarea interdisciplinară și a diminua decalajele educaționale dintre mediul urban și rural. Analizele statistice confirmă că hipertextul modal îmbunătățește semnificativ competențele generale ale elevilor, reduce absenteismul și susține dezvoltarea competențelor digitale ale profesorilor.

Cuvinte-cheie**:** *învățământ profesional, competență lectorală, competență profesională, competență digitală, hipertext modal.*

Introduction

The lack of interest in reading traditionally and the difficulties students face when engaging with complex texts necessitate identifying new pedagogical strategies to stimulate learners. In Romania, vocational education's appeal lies primarily in the prospects of fast employment after graduation. Nevertheless, students with high academic achievements continue to prefer theoretical high schools, which means the need for personalized and innovative teaching methods created specifically for vocational education students.

A major challenge identified in this context is students' decreased interest in traditional reading and their difficulties with complex texts. Recent research – conducted by T. Cartaleanu, O. Cosovan [4], M. Marin [11], M. Hadîrcă [7], and V. Goraș-Postică [6] – highlights the urgent need to adapt teaching methodologies to the psycho-emotional characteristics of vocational students and to leverage digital technologies to stimulate their reading competence. Although the scholarly literature frequently addresses the development of reading skills, few studies focus on the particularities of students within this educational segment, where

learning difficulties, low motivation, and the necessity for novel methods require personalized pedagogical strategies. Therefore, this paper proposes the use of "modal hypertext", an innovative approach that integrates cross-curricular and digital resources to enhance students' reading, digital, and professional competencies.

Thus, integrating ICT tools into the reading development process becomes not only an opportunity but also a pedagogical necessity. The multimodal texts and interactive educational resources proposed by the authors mentioned earlier are essential instruments for stimulating students' interest and enhancing their performance. These methods enable an interdisciplinary approach where reading is no longer perceived as a rigid exercise but rather as a process of discovery, analysis, and interpretation, where students learn to correlate information from different fields with their own personal and professional experiences.

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic significantly altered educational practices, bringing students' and teachers' digital competencies to the forefront. Pedagogical practice highlighted students' adaptability to online learning but also exposed difficulties encountered by teachers over 50 (the analog generation) in using technology and digital content in their teaching. A commonly accepted explanation is that we are living in the digital age, and children, born into this environment, have used digital devices from an early age, being generically referred to as "digital natives".

Prensky described digital natives as follows: "They are used to receiving information very quickly. They prefer parallel processes and multitasking. They prefer graphics to text rather than the opposite. They prefer randomness (like hypertext). They function best when networked. They thrive on instant gratification and frequent rewards. They prefer games over 'serious' work" [12].

From an educational perspective, the presentation of teaching materials must consider students' diverse preferences and digital competencies. Integrating technology into the learning process should complement rather than replace traditional methods. In this sense, a hybrid approach-combining paper-based reading with interactive digital elements-can deliver the best outcomes regarding comprehension, retention, and knowledge application.

Additionally, it is crucial for teachers and educational institutions to acknowledge that transitioning to digital environments requires technological adaptation and psychological and pedagogical adjustments. In developing digital competencies, emphasis should be placed on fostering critical thinking skills, enabling students to evaluate information from multiple sources and select appropriate learning strategies depending on the type of material (paper versus screen).

When working with vocational education students, it is essential to make engagement with texts a natural act rather than a chore; driven by intrinsic motivation rather than obligation—an activity that supports their social and professional lives and their subsequent personal development. Therefore, it is imperative for all teachers to have a deep understanding of the structure and functioning of texts, to effectively support the development of students' competencies in receiving and interpreting them. Thus, teachers from all school disciplines share responsibility in this respect.

When multimodal texts are utilized in education, the paradigm of reference must reflect the structure of contemporary texts themselves: characterized by multimodality and diverse textual elements, which can pose challenges for students unfamiliar with certain content areas or text types.

This adaptation of the educational process to the context of modern society has led to a paradigm shift in developing reading competencies within vocational education, marking an essential and natural transition toward a contemporary approach to enhancing and consolidating skills for reading and comprehending texts. The following aspects can be highlighted regarding this shift:

- Online environments and resources enrich students' reading experiences by providing access to diverse and updated texts and enabling the exploration of complex information interactively and engagingly for so-called "digital natives."

- The possibility emerged to integrate contextualized reading sessions relevant to students' professional fields, establishing a clear relationship between received information and its practical application within their area of specialization.

- Interdisciplinarity and cross-curricular connections have been facilitated through rapid access to information on the same subject across various fields.

- Critical and analytical reading skills have been more readily developed through online communication tools (including Google Forms for opinion sharing), consequently enhancing students' capacity to interpret and evaluate information from various sources, including within their professional specialization.
- Access to diverse online texts has promoted interactive communication in the classroom, debates encouraging idea exchanges, and discussions around individually explored texts.
- Digital tools and software applications used for assessment and monitoring of student progress have facilitated personalized feedback and established effective methods to provide targeted support tailored to the real needs of students.

The concept of hypertext, defined as digital text that allows direct access to additional content via hyperlinks, provides an effective platform for meeting these educational needs. In this paper, we propose an innovative approach called "modal hypertext," which integrates cross-curricular and digital resources to enhance the reading, digital, and professional competencies of vocational education students.

Hypertext represents the predominant format of digital reading, characterized by multimodality due to the combination of multiple digital forms and formats. When accessing various digital formats within a single text while seeking information, the primary difference lies in its interface. This interface is multimodal, unlike linear reading. The key distinction is its structure: hypertext dominates internet reading, has its own textual grammar, and its design combines diverse forms and formats requiring specialized thinking skills.

The term "hypertext" was introduced by Ted Nelson in the 1960s to describe a form of electronic text that allows interactive and non-linear connections between different fragments of information. In education, hypertext began to be widely used with the development of the internet and increased accessibility to digital resources. This enabled dynamic and personalized learning, where students could access additional relevant information, thereby improving content comprehension and retention.

The main features of hypertext include interactivity, immediate accessibility to supplementary information, and the possibility of non-linear content exploration. These aspects enable the educational process to be adapted to students' individual learning styles and rhythms, promoting autonomy and critical thinking development.

The use of hypertext in education is grounded in pedagogical theories such as constructivism and connectivism. Constructivism, a theory developed by J. Piaget and L. Vygotsky, maintains that learning is an active process through which students construct knowledge by exploring and directly interacting with their environment. Connectivism, proposed by G. Siemens [13] and S. Downes [5], emphasizes the importance of connections and information networks, highlighting that learning in the digital age is based on students' ability to navigate complex networks of digital knowledge and information.

The specialized literature provides numerous examples of using hypertext to develop students' reading competencies. Studies conducted by Landow [8], Bolter [2], and Hayles [10] demonstrate that hypertext facilitates the development of interpretive capacity and critical analysis, stimulating divergent thinking and synthesis skills. Moreover, recent research underscores that hypertext contributes to student motivation, reducing cognitive barriers associated with reading linear and traditional texts.

Internationally, various educational studies and projects have demonstrated the effectiveness of hypertext in improving reading competencies. In Finland, the "HyperREAD" project has been successfully implemented, using hypertext to develop reading skills among students with learning difficulties. In the United States, the educational platform "Khan Academy" uses interactive hypertexts to support personalized learning across various disciplines.

Although hypertext offers multiple advantages, literature also identifies certain limitations, including information overload, possible difficulties in coherently navigating content, and challenges related to evaluating competencies acquired exclusively through digital media. Thus, careful hypertext design, emphasizing clarity and relevance of integrated resources, is essential.

In this context, we have proposed an experimental pedagogical approach designed to leverage these insights, contributing to shaping an innovative, sustainable educational tool adapted to contemporary societal demands, embodied in the modal hypertext.

Modal hypertext is a tool by which open educational resources can be harmoniously combined with traditional teaching-learning-assessment methods. It represents an advanced form of organizing and presenting educational content, where the primary text is enriched with interactive links, multimedia, simulations, and additional digital resources. This approach enables teachers to create an interactive learning environment where literature is no longer perceived as an isolated corpus but as a multidimensional space where literary concepts are linked with technical knowledge applicable to students' professional qualifications.

This cross-curricular strategy not only facilitates an applied understanding of literary texts but also contributes to developing teachers' critical thinking and digital competencies, as they need to manage and create digital resources, coordinate educational platforms, and integrate multimedia elements into lessons.

The use of modal hypertexts involves the teacher in creating and managing interactive educational resources using platforms such as Google Classroom, Moodle, or Microsoft Teams. This process includes: selecting and adapting digital content to ensure its relevance to each professional qualification; creating hyperlinks directing students toward supplementary resources (video tutorials, scientific articles, technical simulations); integrating multimedia elements (diagrams, explanatory videos, 3D models) that facilitate the understanding of theoretical concepts and their application within the technical field studied.

Teaching through modal hypertext involves a paradigm shift in educational methodologies, compelling teachers to adopt active learning strategies, such as: **Project-Based Learning** – students engage in research activities where they must correlate literary information with technical field applications; **Flipped Classroom** – students access digital materials before the lesson, allowing classroom time to be dedicated to deepening understanding, discussion, and application of knowledge; **Gamification of the Educational Process** – utilizing interactive applications like Kahoot! or Quizizz for assessments, thereby actively stimulating student engagement.

Integrating modal hypertexts into teaching Romanian language and literature within technological education represents an effective strategy for developing teachers' digital competencies. This approach not only optimizes the educational process but also contributes to transforming teachers into facilitators of digital learning, capable of creating interactive educational experiences relevant to students' future professional lives.

Modal hypertext can best be described as digitally accessible text where literary content (for example, Ion Creangă's *"Povestea lui Harap-Alb"*) is interpreted in connection with concepts from automotive mechanics and road transportation (although similar connections can be made with concepts specific to each professional qualification). It includes hyperlinks to adaptations of literary works on YouTube, comprehension exercises on platforms such as Wordwall, Quizizz, Livresque, etc., online encyclopedias for author information, curricular resources specific to automotive mechanics and road transport, or other useful online resources for students' professional development. In essence, we consider modal hypertext as a transcurricular reading experience, accessing diverse supplementary information through links, enriching and facilitating active engagement with literary texts.

We have chosen to experimentally investigate the utility and effectiveness of this educational tool by using it during Romanian language and literature classes over the course of one school year. The modal hypertexts created for this experimental approach were compiled on a publicly accessible online platform, www.mecanici21.ro [15].

It should be emphasized that reading is an essential tool used from the earliest years of life, playing a fundamental role in developing imagination and creativity. Through reading, we gradually connect with and understand the surrounding world, shape our moral behavior, choose role models to follow, or identify negative examples. Reading allows us to feel, think, explore, and understand others, as well as ourselves.

Considering the graduate profile at each educational level, we can define reading competence as an ensemble of literary concepts, knowledge, abilities, and attitudes that manifest as a result of the reading process. Structurally, we have chosen to represent it synthetically as follows:

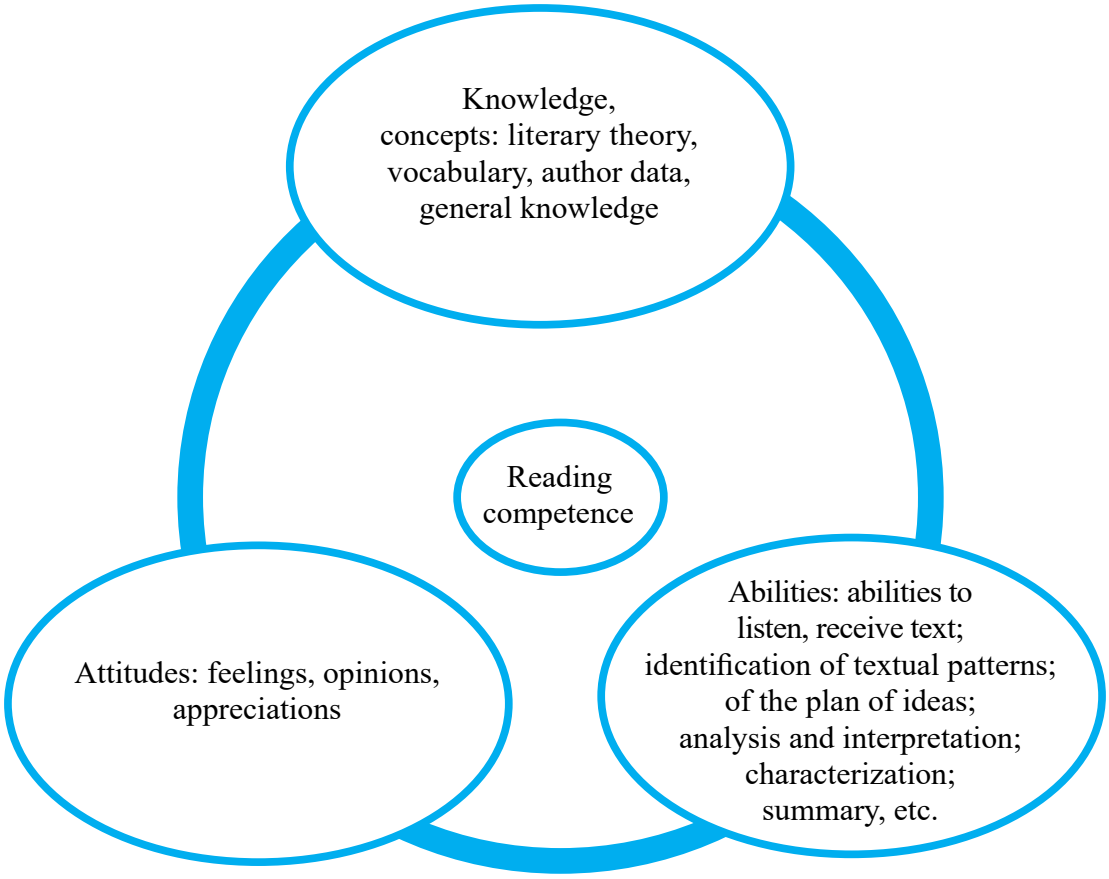


Figure 1. Structure of reading competence (own synthesis)

In order to construct our pedagogical approach, it was necessary to study specialized literature addressing reading, professional, and digital competencies (the targets of modal hypertext). This allowed us to establish a conceptual framework, beginning from Professor M. Marin's assertion that effective reading is not merely recognizing words but also involves meaning-making, critical interaction with the text, and developing a reflective attitude toward its message [11, p. 27].

According to the author, reading competence can be analyzed through three fundamental dimensions [ibid., p. 45]:

- Decoding information – involves recognizing words and understanding the literal meaning of the text. This stage is essential for vocational education students, as many encounter difficulties in identifying the structural and stylistic elements of a text.

- Interpretation – refers to the ability to construct meaning, make inferences, and connect the information read to personal experiences. Marin emphasizes that a competent reader is able to establish connections between the text and its cultural, historical, and personal context [ibid., p. 63]. This aspect is particularly important in vocational education, where reading must be related to students' technological or vocational fields.

- Valorization – implies relating the text to one's own values, opinions, and beliefs. According to Mariana Marin [ibid., p. 82], literary reading should be a transformative experience that shapes students' critical thinking and artistic sensibility. For vocational education students, text valorization can be facilitated by using interactive teaching strategies such as expressive reading, debates on current topics, or content specifically related to their professional qualifications.

Our experimental approach subsequently took new directions since, according to researchers V. Goraş-Postică and T. Cartaleanu [3, p. 102], developing reading competencies in vocational education must take into account three levels of development:

1. **Operational level** – understanding written instructions, technical diagrams, and user manuals. Students must be able to decode information and apply it practically in workshop activities. This level is crucial

for the Automotive Mechanic qualification, where technical documentation plays a fundamental role in vehicle diagnostics and repairs.

2. Interpretive level – establishing connections between the information read and previously acquired knowledge. For instance, a student should be able to correlate a technical text about braking systems with prior practical experiences. Goraș-Postică [ibid., p. 89] argues that correctly interpreting information is essential for effective learning and the proper application of knowledge in new contexts.

3. Reflective and critical level – students must be able to assess the quality and relevance of the information read. This aspect is particularly important when choosing between different technical solutions for a repair. The formation of critical thinking in technical reading is supported by interactive teaching strategies, which encourage debate and text analysis [ibid., p. 134].

Everything gained meaning and applicability when the conclusions derived thus far from the literature review were correlated with the ideas of researcher M. Hadîrcă, who approaches communication competence from an integrated perspective, analyzing its formation and evaluation processes within various educational contexts. An essential dimension of communication competence is reading competence, which, according to the author, involves not only the ability to decode and interpret a text but also to reflectively and critically valorize it [7, p. 94-95].

Starting from the characteristics of reading comprehension competence identified by Hadîrcă, followed by the description of competence levels evaluated during text reading, we adapted these characteristics to reflect the specific context of vocational education.

These characteristics are structured progressively into four distinct stages: elementary, intermediate, advanced, and expert.

At the **elementary level**, the student can identify explicit information in a text but encounters difficulties in interpreting it, limiting themselves to mechanically reproducing content. In the context of using information and communication technologies (ICT), the student manages to access digital resources and modal hypertext but does not fully exploit their potential. Competence assessment at this stage is achieved through guided activities, focusing on identifying and recognizing basic information.

At the **intermediate level**, the student manages to extract and understand both the primary and secondary ideas of a text, making connections between different pieces of information. However, difficulties persist in deciphering implicit symbols and messages. Regarding the use of ICT resources, the student utilizes digital tools such as comparative tables, conceptual schemes, and online dictionaries to deepen understanding but does not fully leverage the potential of modal hypertext. Assessment focuses on the student's analytical and interpretative abilities, using educational platforms to verify comprehension.

The **advanced level** involves the student's ability to critically analyze texts, identify the author's intentions, and connect the information to personal experiences and interdisciplinary knowledge. At this stage, the use of modal hypertext becomes personalized, as the student develops collaboration and idea-sharing competencies on specific educational platforms. Assessment at this level involves complex activities such as argumentative essay writing and collaborative project development, applying knowledge in varied and interdisciplinary contexts.

The **expert level** is characterized by the student's full autonomy in interpretative processes, demonstrating the ability to make well-argued value judgments and synthesize complex ideas in original ways. Students at this level proficiently utilize digital resources, compare multiple sources, and are capable of creating and publishing original content on educational platforms. Assessment at this stage involves sophisticated methods, including in-depth critical analysis, case studies, and independent research, aiming to validate advanced comprehension and autonomous creative ability.

In the formative pedagogical experiment we proposed, we chose to use literary texts available in Romanian Language and Literature textbooks, particularly those by canonical authors included in the mandatory bibliography for the national Baccalaureate exam in Romania. Our intention was for these modal hypertexts to provide vocational students with a necessary tool to continue their studies in the higher secondary education cycle.

For instance, in the novel *„Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război”* (*The Last Night of Love, the First Night of War*) by Camil Petrescu, a modal hypertext could explore connections between characters, war events, and the field of automotive mechanics. Students might, for example, access a hyperlink providing information about the mechanics of vintage cars used during the novel's time period. Simultaneously, information about automotive parts and engine functioning could be linked to specific scenes from the novel. The modal hypertext designed for this novel could also include links to the curricular auxiliary resource *„Autovehicule rutiere”* (*Road Vehicles*) [15], enabling students to observe various components of contemporary vehicle engines and compare them to the transportation methods of the novel's era.

The explicit purpose of using modal hypertext in analyzing the novel *„Mara”* by Ioan Slavici is to facilitate direct connections between literary texts and concrete applications relevant to students' professional fields. For instance, in the scene where Mara presents her shop, embedding hyperlinks to the curricular resource *„Organizarea locului de muncă”* (*Workplace Organization*) [15] aims to familiarize students with practical principles regarding workspace ergonomics, technological documentation needed for efficiently organizing commercial activities, and safety regulations in workshops. Similarly, linking the literary text with the curricular auxiliary *„Exploatarea, diagnosticarea, întreţinerea şi repararea automobilului”* (*Vehicle Operation, Diagnostics, Maintenance, and Repair*) [15] and the chapter on *„Înregistrări contabile”* (*Accounting Records*) [ibid.] has the educational goal of developing economic and accounting skills, which are essential in any technical profession. Thus, students are guided towards an active reading experience anchored in real, professionally relevant contexts.

At the end of the experimental period of using modal hypertexts in class, statistical tests were conducted to identify significant differences between classes that employed this digital tool under the teacher's guidance and those in which students were unaware of the platform hosting these modal hypertexts. We aimed to determine whether technology use and having modal hypertexts compiled in an easily accessible online platform could reduce the educational gap between urban and rural settings and lead to improved academic results, as well as to the development and formation –where applicable – of reading, digital, and professional competencies correlated with the eight key competencies.

Table 1. The sample of the pedagogical experiment

	High School 1 (experimental group)	**High School 2 (CG1) (rural control group)**	**High School 3 (CG2) (urban control group)**
Environment	Rural	Rural	Urban
Class A IX-a	2 tradiţional	1 tradiţional	1 dual
Number of students enrolled in the ninth grade	34 (of which 3 girls)	22 (of which 1 girls)	24 (of which 5 girls)
Number of students included in the sample in the tenth grade, when modal hypertexts were used	28 (34 enrolled, 2 transferred and 5 repeaters – of which 1 girls – after the first year of the experiment)	19 (22 enrolled, 3 repeaters after the first year of the experiment)	24 (24 submitted)
Teachers	2	1	1
Manager	2	2	1
Inspectori şcolari	1 general school inspector, 1 inspector of specialized technical disciplines, 1 inspector of Romanian language and literature		

To validate the results obtained from using modal hypertexts, we conducted a statistical analysis using ANOVA tests and T-tests for comparing means between groups (experimental and control). The study sample consisted of three distinct groups (one experimental group and two control groups - urban and rural), with a clearly defined number of students for each school unit. The collected data included aca-

demic averages in Romanian Language and Literature (LRO), Local Development Curriculum (CDL), overall averages, and specific indicators related to absenteeism (total and unexcused absences). The ANOVA test was employed to determine if differences between groups were statistically significant, while the T-test allowed us to identify the specific impact of the modal hypertext intervention on academic performance.

Preliminary observations revealed that students in the experimental group exhibited a greater improvement in academic performance compared to the control group, both in Romanian Language and Literature and the CDL subject. Specifically, the average score in Romanian Language and Literature increased more significantly in the experimental group, highlighting the benefits of the proposed educational intervention. This academic improvement was accompanied by a reduction in absenteeism, despite the experimental group initially recording more unexcused absences compared to the control group.

- The average score in Romanian Language and Literature (LRO) increased in both groups, but the experimental group experienced a greater increase (+1.29 points vs. +0.51 in the control group).
- The average score in Local Development Curriculum (CDL) increased significantly more in the experimental group (+0.96 points compared to +0.05 in the control group).
- The overall academic average was higher in the experimental group in the 2022-2023 academic year (7.26 vs. 7.09).

Absenteeism was also positively influenced, as follows:

- Total absences decreased in both groups, but more significantly in the control group (-9.41 compared to -30.54 in the control group).
- Total unexcused absences decreased more substantially in the control group (-10.72 compared to -25.75 in the experimental group), but the experimental group initially had a higher number of absences.

A clearer picture of the evolution of reading competence among students in the experimental group can be observed by examining the following table:

Table 2. Statistical situation of the evolution of the students in the experimental sample

Level / Experimental Stage	Originally		Final	
	Experimental Group	Control group	Experimental Group	Control group
Elementary	5	CG1 = 2 CG2 = 0	0	CG1 = 0 CG2 = 0
Medium	22	CG1 = 16 CG2 = 13	0	CG1 = 2 CG2 = 0
Advanced	1	CG1 = 1 CG2 = 11	20	CG1 = 13 CG2 = 14
	0		8	
Expert	0	CG1 = 0 CG2 = 0	8	CG1 = 4 CG2 = 10

Statistical analyses, including T-tests and Pearson correlations, confirmed the significant positive impact of modal hypertext on student competencies, particularly within the Local Development Curriculum (CDL). Although not all T-test results were statistically significant, the overall trends suggest that the intervention promoted genuine progress among students in the experimental group. Pearson correlations revealed that improvements in performance in Romanian Language and Literature strongly indicated overall academic progress, while reduced absenteeism negatively correlated with academic performance, thus confirming the indirect benefits of modal hypertext on student motivation and participation. In conclusion, these findings support the initial hypothesis, indicating that modal hypertext effectively contributes to the development of students' reading and general competencies.

These results reinforce the hypothesis that modal hypertexts have positively impacted students' reading and general competencies while simultaneously reducing absenteeism.

Analyzing the results of both theoretical and experimental research allowed us to outline ***the profile of vocational education students who used modal hypertexts to develop their reading competencies*** (in accordance with the developmental levels of reading, professional, and digital competencies):

At the **operational level**: correctly interprets technical and literary texts; recognizes and applies key terms in new contexts; efficiently identifies the main ideas in studied texts; uses specific digital tools for quickly decoding texts; independently navigates modal hypertexts to find relevant information.

At the **interpretive level**: correlates literary and technical information within professional contexts; uses digital resources (comparative tables, conceptual diagrams, online dictionaries) to deepen text comprehension; makes logical inferences among different textual elements presented in hypertexts; applies information from reading to solve practical problems specific to their professional qualification.

At the **reflective and critical level**: conducts complex critical analyses of texts, formulating well-argued judgments; autonomously applies advanced digital learning methods and contributes original content to educational platforms; synthesizes essential ideas from multiple digital sources; develops proactive attitudes towards continuous learning and professional development.

Thus, graduates trained through the use of modal hypertext are well-prepared for effective integration into the labor market and for lifelong learning, being capable of effectively and innovatively combining reading, digital, and professional knowledge.

Additionally, we were able to establish several conclusions regarding modal hypertext as a digital means for developing reading competencies among vocational education students.

Modal hypertext stands out through its capacity to create explicit and relevant connections between literary content and technical or professional knowledge. This approach enables vocational students to perceive literature's direct relevance to their professional training and significantly contributes to developing critical and analytical thinking. Moreover, modal hypertext enhances students' motivation since the presented cross-disciplinary connections closely relate to their professional reality. Lastly, easy and quick access to diverse interactive educational resources increases the efficiency of the learning process and fosters students' autonomy.

Regarding the originality and innovative contribution of this educational tool, we note that, unlike traditional hypertexts, modal hypertext does not limit itself to non-linear information exploration but introduces an explicitly interdisciplinary and cross-curricular dimension. It deliberately connects literary content with technical and practical notions specific to professional qualifications. Consequently, reading becomes directly relevant to the real and professional context of vocational students, actively stimulating their motivation and engagement in learning.

Characteristics granting uniqueness to modal hypertext include:

1. Explicit cross-curricular integration – connecting Romanian literature with technical subjects (in our case, automotive mechanics and road transportation), which is certainly an uncommon yet highly valuable approach, particularly in vocational education.
2. Access to diverse and clearly specified digital resources – video adaptations (YouTube), interactive comprehension exercises (Wordwall and similar platforms), online encyclopedias (Wikipedia), and curricular resources specifically tailored to professional qualifications.
3. Clearly defined pedagogical purpose – simultaneous and integrated development of reading, digital, and professional competencies in an effective and appealing manner for vocational school students.
4. Anticipated educational impact and arguments concerning its relevance for developing professional competencies.
5. Teachers can select resources which answer to the students' real needs, ranging from academic and professional skill development to addressing specific health-related educational requirements.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we emphasize that this particular approach to hypertext constitutes a valuable educational innovation, especially within vocational education. Students in this field require not only strictly

technical and professional competencies but also transversal skills – reading and digital – that facilitate a deeper understanding of the broader professional and cultural context. Thus, modal hypertext can serve as an effective pedagogical practice within both Romanian and international educational contexts, particularly given its pedagogical relevance and added interdisciplinary value.

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Data about the authors:

Viorica GORAȘ-POSTICĂ, Habilitated PhD in Pedagogical Sciences, University Professor, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Sociology and Social Work, Moldova State University.
ORCID: 0000-0001-9096-621X
E-mail: vpostica@prodidactica.md

Lucica CROITORU, PhD student in the Doctoral School of Humanities and Education, Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Sociology and Social Work, Moldova State University.
ORCID: 0009-0007-6312-0367
E-mail: looloo1109@gmail.com

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