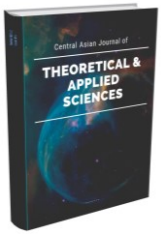

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Article

The Level of Inclusion of Lateral Thinking Skills in Middle School History Textbooks

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Abstract: This study aims to evaluate the extent to which social studies textbooks focus on enhancing lateral thinking skills in the early stages of development. The study objectives were achieved using the descriptive analytical approach, specifically using the content analysis methodology. The study sample included social studies textbooks specifically prepared for middle school students for the next two academic years 2023 and 2024. The scholars developed a criterion that includes indicators of scientific reasoning abilities in the book (study sample) to achieve the objectives of this study. The results showed that the social studies textbooks for the first and second grades did not enhance the acquisition of lateral thinking abilities, while the third grade textbooks did. Through the investigation, it was found that the social studies textbooks used in the middle school (within the study sample) lack the ability to develop lateral thinking skills. However, although the third grade social studies textbook includes lateral thinking skills, the first and second grade books lack these abilities. The results indicate that curriculum developers should be provided with guidance. The goal is to re-evaluate the content of social studies textbooks for first and second grade students, with the aim of integrating a greater focus on lateral thinking skills in a lateral manner, while ensuring that no important topics are omitted. The scholars suggested conducting a study to determine the extent to which social studies textbooks for high school students contain lateral thinking skills.

Keywords: Inclusion of lateral thinking skills, history textbooks, middle school

Chapter One

First: Problem of Study

The scholars believe that the content of history textbooks must be subject to continuous evaluation processes, according to standards consistent with contemporary educational trends emphasizing the need to select and organize educational content in a way that contributes to the development of diverse thinking skills among students, enabling them to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes appropriate to meet the demands of contemporary life, which is witnessing diverse and multiple scientific changes in all its fields. This is a matter confirmed by some local scientific studies, including the study by (Ajrash, 2016). Therefore, the two scholars sought to evaluate history textbooks at the

middle school based on lateral thinking skills, as this is consistent with the student's maturity and mental abilities. In addition to their suitability for the nature of the educational material, the question of this study is crystallized in answering the following question: To what extent are situational thinking skills included in middle school history textbooks?

Second: Significance of Study

A textbook is the organized knowledge selected by experts specializing in a specific field of knowledge, which includes facts, ideas, skills, values, and integrated attitudes in a way that can be imparted to students. To achieve their lateral and integrated cognitive, emotional, and skill-based development in a way that helps them achieve the educational goals planned in advance (Radhwan et al., 2014:38). Therefore, it is the focus of the educational curriculum, because it is the applied aspect of one of its main elements, which is the content. This necessitated that a set of educational, scientific and technical standards be taken into account in selecting its content and design, making it a flexible textbook that allows those responsible for planning and implementing it the ability to evaluate its content and develop it continuously in a way that takes into account new developments in society (Attia, 2013: 27).

Analyzing textbook content has become of paramount importance for several reasons, including the growing information revolution and the transformations occurring in all areas of life. Furthermore, the advancement of society is linked to the development of the curricula adopted within it. Each is influenced by the other, both quantitatively and qualitatively. This represents the path to determining the extent of its success in achieving the goals for which it was designed. No matter how well-crafted the planning, production, and implementation of a textbook, its fulfillment of its functions and attainment of its desired goals are based on a continuous and lateral evaluation process of all its components (Al-Hashemi and Mohsen, 2013: 212).

Since analyzing the content of textbooks is of utmost importance, analyzing history textbooks deserves attention in terms of their nature, composition, position, and importance in developing students' psychology and skills. This helps them distinguish facts and knowledge, understand multiple aspects and different levels of environmental images, and deepen their understanding and interpretation of the relationships that connect phenomena. Their occurrence and causal connections help develop the learner's scientific thinking and enhance their various abilities (Mahmoud, 2005: 5). Therefore, history textbook authors have been keen to include and present them in an engaging manner that enriches them with learning activities and practice. This stimulates students' enthusiasm and develops their diverse thinking styles, such as the ability to observe closely, and encourages them to study and gather historical information, compare, analyze, and summarize, and to form the correct approach to the environment and its development (Al-Tufaili and Al-Jarrah, 2016: 395).

The two scholars believe that learning for the sake of thinking has become a forefront of the educational institution's goals. Therefore, they have worked to integrate thinking patterns and its various processes into the prescribed curriculum. Because it moves learning from its theoretical aspect to its practical aspect, lateral thinking is one of the most important types of thinking, the various skills of which are included in the content of history textbooks. Lateral thinking represents the essence of modern scientific thought, as it enables students to fully and precisely understand things by identifying the characteristics of their components, analyzing and classifying them, and then evaluating and making judgments about them. Therefore, it develops creative skills within them, enabling them to generate new ideas that depart from traditional thinking patterns (Jaber, 2008: 258). Therefore, it is one of the types of lateral thinking whose skills are compatible with the characteristics and abilities of students in the preparatory stage.

From the aforementioned, the significance of this study can be demonstrated as follows:

1. The possibility of benefiting those responsible for planning and implementing the history curriculum by enlightening them about the importance of employing lateral

thinking skills when selecting, organizing, and practicing content appropriate to students' maturity levels, abilities, experiences, and needs, as they represent the practical aspect of the learning process.

2. Providing a standardized scientific measure represented by a list of lateral thinking skills, their indicators, and definitions, as well as providing sound procedural guidelines that educational scholars can utilize in other similar scientific studies.

3. The importance of thinking in acquiring and generating knowledge, as a fundamental means of building student character, as well as the reliance of education and teaching on thinking patterns in modern education.

4- The importance of lateral thinking in helping students generates new ideas and perceptions.

Third: Study Objectives: This study aims to:

1. Prepare a list of lateral thinking skills and their indicators.

2. Identify the degree of inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of the third-grade middle school history textbook.

Fourth: Study Limitations: This study is limited as follows:

1. Temporal Limits: This study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2023-2024.

2. Spatial Limits: This study was conducted in the first edition of the social studies textbook for the third-grade middle school, 2023, for the academic year 2023-2024 AD.

3. Substantive Limits: This study was conducted to identify the lateral thinking skills included in the content of the history textbook for the third-grade middle school for the academic year 2022-2023 AD.

Fifth: Definition of Terms

1. Lateral thinking skills: " " (Al-Halfi, 2020: 147).

- Theoretical Definition: These are specific mental processes, practiced by an individual in an organized and intentional manner, through which they can distinguish between objects, recognize their characteristics, identify their main components and parts, clarify their functions, the nature of the relationships between them, and the link that binds them together.

- Procedural definition: These are the mental abilities according to which a content analysis form for the third-grade history textbook is prepared, to determine the extent to which it includes indicators of lateral thinking.

2 - History: The science concerned with studying".

(Al-Daraji, 2010:12).

- Theoretical definition: A science that studies the relationship between humans and their surrounding environment, aiming to achieve a general goal in line with the country's social and educational philosophy. It plays an important role in raising a generation capable of meeting economic, social, cultural, and political development needs, contributing to building society, and finding solutions to existing problems within societies.

- Procedural definition: A set of historical knowledge, information, principles, facts, and concepts, including third-grade middle school history textbooks, approved by the Ministry of Education in Iraq for the academic year 2023-2024.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

First: Theoretical Background

1 - Lateral thinking: It is a pattern of thinking rich in concepts, coherently organized, and constantly seeking exploration. It is equivalent to the integration of lateral thinking with creative thinking. Furthermore, it is flexible and resourceful thinking, as it involves searching for knowledge resources that he needs, and is flexible in his ability to move freely in using these resources to achieve maximum effectiveness (Lipman, 1998: 34-36).

In recent years, many educators have emphasized the importance of teaching lateral thinking and testing students on this type of thinking as a targeted scientific approach. Specialized

programs for this purpose have been found in many regions of the United States, including the states of Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, and others (Al-Atoum et al., 2007: 219). Therefore, its skills have been included in textbooks because its skills are consistent with the natural way humans learn, which can only be achieved through careful observation, analysis, synthesis, comparison, abstraction, and generalization (Al-Mahdawi and Kadhim, 2015:20).

1-1 Lateral Thinking Skills

When the scholar reviewed the theoretical literature and some previous studies, she noted the availability of multiple and diverse lateral thinking skills, which educational scholars have classified in many ways. The scholar attributes the difference in their number to the fact that some of these skills implicitly include the meaning of others. De Bono (1998) argued that lateral thinking is based on several skills that can be trained, describing it as a model characterized by lateralness and diversity in the skills it includes. De Bono (1998) classified thinking skills into (5) main skills, which included (21) sub-skills arranged in descending order from lowest to highest. The selection and arrangement of these skills were based on two main criteria:

1. It must be a documented skill, based on numerous scientific studies.
2. It must be a skill capable of being learned and applied practically during the learning process, whether inside or outside the classroom (Al-Thiabi, 2013: 51).

Second: Literature Review

1. Study of Mohammed (2016)

Mind Habits Predicting Lateral Thinking

Study Location: The study was conducted in 2016 in the Arab Republic of Egypt, at Menoufia University, Faculty of Education.

Study Objective: This study aims to explore the interrelationship between mental habits and lateral thinking, to reveal the extent to which the components and skills of lateral thinking can be predicted through mental habits, and to reveal the differences in mental habits between those high and low in lateral thinking.

Study Methodology: The scholar used a descriptive correlational approach (relationship study).

Study Population and Sample: The study population is university students, and the study sample consisted of 575 female students from the second year of the science department at the Faculty of Education, Menoufia University, for the academic year 2015-2016.

Study Tool: The scholar used two tools in his study. He developed a mind scale for university students based on Costa & Kallick's classification, which includes 16 mental habits. He also developed a lateral thinking scale based on the ideas of de Bono.

Statistical Methods: The statistical analysis was performed using multiple linear regression analysis, canonical correlation analysis, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and one-way analysis of variance.

Study Results: The scholar concluded that there are only eight mental habits that can be used to predict the components and skills of lateral thinking. The combined contribution of these eight mental habits to the components and skills of lateral thinking was determined.

2- Study of Al-Sultan (2022 AD)

The Level of Lateral Thinking and Its Relationship to Linguistic Ability among Students in Arabic Language Departments

Study Location: The study was conducted in 2022 AD in the Republic of Iraq, at Al-Qadisiyah University, College of Education.

Study objective: This study aims to identify statistically significant differences in the lateral thinking of students in Arabic language departments for male and female variables, and to identify the correlation between lateral thinking and linguistic ability in Arabic language departments.

Study methodology: The descriptive correlational approach (relationship study) was used.

Study population and sample: The study population comprised fourth-year Arabic language department students in the colleges of education and arts at the universities of Al-Qadisiyah, Kufa, Muthanna, Babylon, and Karbala. The study sample comprised 245 male and female students in the Arabic language departments.

Study tool: The scholar used two tools: the lateral thinking test, and the linguistic ability test, to measure the linguistic ability of students in Arabic language departments.
Statistical Methods: The scholar used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to extract a single-sample t-test for the lateral reasoning test and the linguistic ability test, a t-test for two independent samples to test the significance of the difference between males and females between the two tests, and a Pearson correlation coefficient to determine the relationship between the two variables.
Study Results: The scholar concluded that the study sample possessed a good level of lateral reasoning, with statistically significant differences between males and females in lateral reasoning, in favor of males. The study sample also possessed a good level of linguistic ability, with a statistically significant relationship between males and females in linguistic ability, in favor of males. There was a direct relationship between lateral reasoning and linguistic ability, meaning that the higher the study sample's thinking, the better their linguistic ability.

Chapter Three

Scholar's Methodology and Procedures

First: Study Methodology

The scholars followed the descriptive analytical study method, using content analysis as the appropriate method for the study procedures.

Second: Study Community and Its Sample

The study community consisted of history textbooks for the middle school scheduled to be taught for the academic year (2023-2024), and Table 1 clarifies this:

Table (1)

The table demonstrates the study community for the third-grade middle school history textbooks for the academic year (2023-2024)

Sr. No.	Book title	Edition	Year of printing	Total number of pages	Number of analyzed pages	Number of excluded pages	Number of chapters
1	History for the First Middle School Grade	Sixth	2024	132	105	18	5
2	History for the Second Middle School Grade	Third	2024	140	100	12	6
3	History for the Third	Thirteenth	2023	172	157	15	6

	Middle School Grade						
Total				477	432	45	17

As for the study sample, after reviewing the topics and contents of the third-grade history textbook, the following pages were excluded from the analysis process:

A. Introductions, as they provide an introduction to the book's content.

B. Indexes, as they present the subject headings.

C. Titles, as the topics reflect those headings.

D. Classroom questions, as they assess the content of the topics.

After the exclusion process, the sample of book pages subject to analysis was (157) pages, representing a percentage of (0.27%) of the population, as shown in Table (1).

Third: Study Tool: Analysis Criterion (Analysis Card):

To achieve the objectives of this study, the scholars should develop a criterion that includes an indicator to determine the extent of the availability of lateral thinking skills in the book (the study sample). The scholars followed the following steps:

A- Preparing a list of lateral thinking skills and their indicators by reviewing the theoretical literature and previous studies related to the study topic. The scholars found different classifications of lateral thinking skills, including: VanRossenbos (1990), Abdulhadi et al. (2009), Attia (2015), Bashara et al. (2011), and Razouki and Jamila (2019). The scholar adopted De Bono (1998) for lateral thinking skills, which includes (5) main skills with (15) sub-skills. This classification includes the following basic skills:

1. Skills for generating new perceptions
2. Skills for generating new concepts
3. Skills for generating new ideas
4. Skills for generating new alternatives
5. Skills for generating new creations

A preliminary list was prepared, including five main skills, under which 59 practical sub-indicators were included, by which the extent of these skills' availability in the books could be determined (the study sample is non-existent). This list includes a clear and precise definition of each main skill and its indicator. It was then presented, along with the books in the study sample, to a group of specialists in social studies curricula and teaching methods, as well as measurement and evaluation, to obtain their opinions on their suitability for the learning content from a linguistic and procedural perspective, their validity in analyzing the book (the study sample), and whether the indicators belong to the main skills. A 0% agreement rate was adopted by the experts. After statistically processing the data, some sub-indicators were deleted, and others

were merged, as they were close in meaning and purpose from the experts' perspective. Accordingly, the final list of lateral thinking skills and their indicators consisted of five main skills and 45 sub-indicators.

B- Preparing a history textbook activity analysis card and its exercises (the study sample); to determine the degree to which it includes higher-order thinking indicators. A list of lateral thinking skills and its practical indicators were included in Appendix 1. The scholars prepared the analysis card according to the following steps:

1. Objective of the content analysis card: To determine the level of inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of history textbooks and their exercises for the preparatory stage (Part One).

2. Defining the unit of analysis: This includes the following:

A. Recording unit: The scholars adopted the idea unit, both explicit and implicit, as the unit of analysis, as it aligns with the nature of the educational content under study.

B. Context unit (content): The scholars adopted the phrase that includes the idea as the unit of context.

C. Enumeration unit: The scholars adopted repetition, as it gives equal weight to each idea in the content.

4. Defining the standard ratio (criterion); To compare the results of the analysis: The scholar chose a percentage (70%) as a standard for comparing the results of the analysis process, and judging the level of inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the history textbook (study sample) is based on the agreement of the judges on this percentage in light of the questionnaire that was presented to them to estimate an appropriate criterion to which the results that the study concludes can be compared.

5- Validity of the Analysis Tool: The scholars verified this by analyzing 20 pages of the book (the study sample) according to the criteria they had prepared. They then presented the results of the analysis, along with the curriculum content and the list of lateral thinking skills, to three of their colleagues, experts in social studies teaching methods. They confirmed the validity of the analysis process, and thus it can be said that the tool is valid in measuring what it was designed for.

6- Reliability of the Tool: The scholars adopted two types of reliability:

A- Agreement over time: The scholars reanalyzed the pages they had previously analyzed 30 days after the first application, after statistically processing them using the Holsti's equation to determine the reliability coefficient between the two analyses. The reliability coefficient value reached 0.78, a high percentage indicating the reliability of the analysis process. Table 3 illustrates this.

B - Agreement between external analysts: The scholars sought the help of two specialists in social studies teaching methods, and informed them of the rules and foundations of the analysis process, and gave them the activities and exercises that he had previously analyzed. After statistically processing the data using the Holsti's

equation, the values of the reliability coefficients were high. The percentage of agreement coefficients is considered acceptable if it reaches (0.70) or more (Al-Kubaisi, 2010: 43). Table 2 shows this:

Table (2) Reliability Coefficients for the Analysis Card

Sr. No.	Type of agreement	Reliability coefficient
1	Agreement over time between the scholar and himself	0.78
2	Agreement between the scholar and the first analyst	0.70
3	Agreement between the scholar and the second analyst	0.73
4	Agreement between external analysts	0.79
Overall reliability coefficient of the instrument		0.75

*The analysis tool in its final form: It consisted of 5 main skills of lateral thinking skills, under which 45 indicators fall, indicating the extent to which it includes the content of the history textbook for the sixth literary grade, and Appendix 1 clarifies this.

Fourth: Study Implementation Procedures: After verifying the validity and reliability of the study tool, the scholars followed the following procedures:

1. Reading the content of the history textbook for the sixth grade (literary branch) (the study sample) to understand the general ideas it contains.

2- Reading the content of the history textbook for the third grade of middle school a second time, carefully and consciously, to determine its explicit or implicit affiliation to any of the 45 indicators, based on the consistency of the content and their significance for the indicator's content for one of the lateral thinking skills.

3- If the statement includes more than one requirement, each requirement is treated as a separate indicator.

3- The indicators are coded with numbers to facilitate the scholar's analysis.

4- Analyzing the content and assigning a frequency under the type of lateral thinking skill that it represents.

6- The results obtained are tabulated into tables to calculate the frequencies obtained by each lateral thinking skill, and then statistically analyzed.

Fifth: Statistical Methods: The scholars used the following statistical methods:

1. Frequencies and percentages to determine the extent to which lateral thinking skills are included in the activities of the third-grade history textbook for the academic year (2023-2024).

2. Percentages and arithmetic means to determine the reliability of the analysis tool and verify the agreement of the arbitrators.

1. Holsti's equation to establish concurrent validity.

Chapter Four

Study Results

First: Presentation of the Results. The results will be presented according to the objectives of this study, as follows:

First objective: To verify, through precise scientific procedures and sound statistical procedures, the scholar followed when constructing the tool (a content analysis card containing a list of lateral thinking skills and their indicators), which were presented in detail in Chapter Three.

Second objective: To determine the degree of inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of the first-grade middle school history textbook.

The scholars analyzed the content of the first-grade history textbook, which is 132 pages long, based on lateral thinking skills. They found that the number of repetitions was 82, distributed across five main skills. Accordingly, the percentage of lateral thinking skills included in the history textbook (study sample) was 65.6%, which is lower than the criterion level adopted in this study, which is 70%. In other words, lateral thinking skills are not included in the content of the history textbook (study sample). Table 3 shows the frequencies, calculated percentages, ranks, and inclusion level.

Table 3

The table demonstrates the inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of the first-grade middle school history textbook.

r. No.	Basic Lateral Thinking Skills	Number of indicators	otal repetitions	Percentage	kill ranking	nclusion level
1	kills for New erceptions	12	33	40,24%	2	(65,6%) Not included

2	kills for Generating lew Concepts	12	24	29,27%	1	
3	kills for Generating lew Ideas	6	11	13,41%	4	
4	kills for Generating lew Alternatives	9	9	10,98%	3	
5	kills for Generating lew Creations	6	5	6,1%	5	
Total		45	82	100%		

The table above shows that the content of the first-grade middle school history textbook included, to varying degrees, all of the skills of lateral thinking. Analytical skills came in first place with 33 occurrences, representing a percentage of 40.24%. Evaluation skills came in last place with 6 occurrences, representing a percentage of 6.1%.

Third objective: To determine the degree of inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of the history textbook for the fifth grade, literary branch. The scholars analyzed the content of the 150-page history textbook for the fifth grade, literature section, according to lateral thinking skills. They found that the number of occurrences was 103 occurrences, distributed across five main skills. Accordingly, the percentage of inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of the social studies textbook (the study sample) was 68.67%, which is lower than the standard level adopted in this study, which is 70%. This means that lateral thinking skills are not included in the content of the history textbook (the study sample). Table 4 shows the frequencies, calculated percentages, ranks, and level of inclusion.

Table 4

The table demonstrates the inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of the second-grade middle school history textbook.

Sr. No.	Lateral Thinking Skills	Number of indicators	Total repetitions	Percentage	Skill ranking	Inclusion level
1	Skills for Generating New erceptions	12	42	40,78	1	(68,67%) Not included
2	Skills for Generating New oncepts	12	31	30,10	2	
3	Skills for Generating New deas	6	17	16,50	4	
4	Skills for Generating New lternatives	9	7	6,79	3	
5	Skills for Generating New reations	6	6	5,83	5	
Total		45	103	100%		

The table above shows that the content of the history textbook for the fifth-grade literary branch included, to varying degrees, all lateral thinking skills. Organizational skills ranked first, with 42 occurrences, representing a percentage of 40.78%, while evaluation skills ranked last, with 6 occurrences, representing a percentage of 5.83%.

Fourth objective: The degree of inclusion of lateral thinking skills is to be defined in the content of the third-grade middle school history textbook.

The scholars analyzed the content of the 157-page history textbook for the sixth-grade literary branch according to lateral thinking skills. They found that the number of occurrences was 113 occurrences, distributed across five main skills. Accordingly, the percentage of inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of the history textbook used in the study sample was 71.97%, which is higher than the criterion level adopted in this study, which is 70%. Meaning: Lateral thinking skills are included in the content of the history textbook (the study sample), and Table 5 shows the calculated frequencies and percentages, ranks, and level of inclusion.

Table (5)

The table demonstrates the inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of the th ird-grade middle school history textbook.

Sr. No.	Lateral Thinking Skills	Number of indicators	Total repetitions	Percentage	Skill ranking	Inclusion level
1	Skills for Generating New Perceptions	12	47	41,60	2	(71,97%) Not included
2	Skills for Generating New Concepts	12	31	27,44	1	
3	Skills for Generating New Ideas	6	15	13,27	4	
4	Skills for Generating New Alternatives	9	11	9,73	3	
5	Skills for Generating New Creations	6	9	7,96	5	
Total		45	113	100%		

The table above shows that the content of the first-grade middle school history textbook included all lateral thinking skills to varying degrees. "Analysis Skills" ranked first with 47 occurrences, representing a percentage of 41.60%, while "Evaluation Skills" ranked last with 9 occurrences, representing a percentage of 7.96%.

Fifth Objective: To identify the level of inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of social studies textbooks for the first, second, and third grades combined.

The scholars analyzed the content of the 432-page middle school history textbooks (first, second, and third grades) based on lateral thinking skills. They found that the number of occurrences was 298, distributed across five main skills. Accordingly, the percentage of inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of middle school history textbooks combined was 68.98, which is lower than the criterion level adopted in this study, which is 70%. Meaning: Lateral thinking skills are not included in the content of middle school history textbooks (the study sample) as a whole. The scholar calculated the frequencies, percentages, ranks, and inclusion levels of these skills, as illustrated in Table 6.

Table (6)

The table demonstrates the inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of middle school history textbooks as a whole.

Sr. No.	Analytical Thinking Skills	First		Second		Third		Total		Rank	Inclusion level
		Repetition	Percentage	Repetition	Percentage	Repetition	Percentage	Repetition	Percentage		
1	Skills for Generating New Perceptions	33	40,24 %	31	30,10	47	41,60	111	37,25	2	(68,98 %) Not included
2	Skills for Generating New Concepts	24	29,27 %	42	40,78	31	27,44	97	32,55	1	
3	Skills for Generating New Ideas	11	13,41 %	17	16,50	15	13,27	43	14,43	4	
4	Skills for Generating New Alternatives	9	10,98 %	7	6,79	11	9,73	27	9,06	3	
5	Skills for Generating New Creations	5	6,1%	6	5,83	9	7,96	20	6,71	5	
Total		82	100%	103	100%	113	100%	298	100%		

It is clear from the table above that the content of history textbooks for the middle school combined includes, to varying degrees, all lateral thinking skills. Analytical skills came in first place with 111 occurrences, representing a percentage of 37.25%. Organizational skills came in second place with 97 occurrences, representing a percentage of 32.55%. Generation skills came in third place with 43 occurrences, representing a percentage of 14.43%. Integration and integration skills came in fourth place with 27 occurrences, representing a percentage of 9.06%.

Second: Interpretation of the Results

1. Tables 3, 4, and 5 show the following:

A. Lateral thinking skills were not included in the content of the history textbooks for the first and second middle school grades, while they were included in the history textbook for the third grade, compared to the reported percentage of 70%. The scholar attributes this to the fact that the authors of these textbooks did not adopt specific scientific standards or foundations when including lateral thinking skills in their content, due to their lack of awareness of the importance of The importance of integrating thinking skills into the curriculum is sufficiently emphasized, as the scholars did not observe any indication of their knowledge of this subject. This belief was reinforced by the fact that none of the scholars included experts in educational

and psychological sciences, teaching methods, and measurement and evaluation specializing in curriculum development. Furthermore, the nature of some historical topics at a given educational level may require certain lateral thinking skills over others, and therefore, their inclusion may have been ill-considered.

B - The level of inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of middle school history textbooks gradually increased with the progression of the educational level. This indicates that the authors of these books took into account the principles of content selection and organization when constructing the curriculum, which emphasize the need to arrange it logically, in line with the students' intellectual and cognitive development. As the educational level progresses, the content must include higher-level skills that are consistent with the level of development of students' mental abilities and their level of thinking, and at a consistent pace.

2- Table 6 shows that the history textbooks (study sample) included a good number of lateral thinking skills in their content. However, their repetitions varied from one book to another, increasing or decreasing. The scholars attribute this to the fact that the process of including them was unbalanced and did not follow a standard or a clear logical sequence governing the process of including them. In addition, the multiplicity of the main lateral thinking skills and the diversity of their sub-indicators made it difficult for the authors of history textbooks for the middle school to achieve lateral coverage of them and include them in activities and exercises.

Third: Findings

The scholars concluded with the following findings:

1. Lateral thinking skills were not included in the content of history textbooks for the middle school (the study sample) combined, compared to the reported percentage adopted in this study.

2. Lateral thinking skills were included in the activities of the history textbook for the third-grade middle school, but were not included in the content of the history textbooks for the first and second middle school grades, compared to the reported percentage adopted in this study.

3- The inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of history textbooks for the middle school (the study sample) was not according to specific criteria, but rather was distributed randomly, at varying rates.

Fourth: Recommendations

1. Direct curriculum designers to restructure the content of history textbooks for the first and second middle school grades and design them in a way that takes into account the inclusion of more lateral thinking skills in balanced proportions, without neglecting any of them.

2. Consider the principles of balance and integration when including lateral thinking skills in the content of history textbooks for the middle school, according to specific criteria.

3. The importance of involving experts in social studies curricula, teaching methods, and measurement and evaluation in textbook writing committees.

Fifth: Suggestions

1. Conduct a study to determine the level of inclusion of lateral thinking skills in the content of history textbooks for the preparatory stage.

2- Conduct a study to determine the level of inclusion of other types of analytical and synthetic thinking skills in the content of social studies textbooks for the middle school and preparatory stages.

2. Conduct a comparative study between history textbooks for the middle school and preparatory stages in Iraq and other Arab countries regarding the level of inclusion of lateral thinking skills.

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