

Comic Strip Humour and Empathy as Methodological Instruments in Teaching

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Abstract

Laughter is an instinctive activity that facilitates social communication and can be used to enrich the education system. Taking into consideration that children are, by their nature, visually oriented, the humour and empathy of the comic strip make it an appropriate methodological instrument for the acquisition of new learning materials. The popular comic strip Alan Ford consolidates realist elements with social satire and black humour, owing its popularity and longevity to the creativity of its authors who accept self-irony as a powerful tool in their artistic expression. The author of this paper examines the possibility of applying the Alan Ford comic strip in primary and secondary school teaching as well as the influence of humorous discourse on the efficiency of the educational process. The importance of humour, as one of the most desired teacher's characteristics, is examined in the research. A total of 14 schools of the Primorsko-Goranska County participated in the research; the sample consisted of 315 primary school pupils and senior secondary school students. Data distribution analysis points at the conclusion that humour has a significant influence on the efficiency of teaching and the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils, while the methodology of comic strips provides everyday discourse in teaching.

Key words: Alan Ford; comic self-irony; humour in class; media culture

*"Smile may last for just one moment, but in memory, it can last a lifetime. That's why we give it and receive it from others."
(Edward W. Reiler)*

Introduction

Laughter is an instinctive activity and, in its appearance as a specific alternative to the *serious* reality, a separate form of reality. The humour phenomenon is inherent to

all socio-cultural settings within all time periods. Humour in various forms asserts its divergence as a communication technique and as an inevitable phenomenon in the course of human experience conceptualisation (Relja-Baturina, 2010). In relation to the previous decades, the contemporary institutional upbringing and education are realised in transformed communication circumstances and a different social setting, which asserts itself as a current social and pedagogical problem. Leading European methodologists point at the need to adjust teaching practices to contemporary demands. Education constantly strives to fulfil the basic values in human life, but it is often frustrating and joyless, inaugurating prohibitions and rules in its dullness. The correlation between joy and health is an essential factor in the young person's development. Hence, humour can influence the enjoyable atmosphere of teaching. One gets the impression that the motivating didactical possibilities of laughter are not fully exploited in the Croatian schooling system. The traditional view that play and laughter in the 'serious' school ambience lack seriousness leads to the situation in which wittiness, as an inherent human characteristic, is fully neglected and suppressed in the teaching practice. Why is it so and can humour influence the efficiency of classroom teaching?

This text examines the possibilities of implementing humour into school space, examining its influence on the results of teaching and the educational process, and suggests the guidelines for its application. In the course of the research, the perception of wittiness as one of the desired teacher's characteristics is examined. Humour is an important feature of many comic strips, the medium that slowly loses its former power in the expansion of interface. The survey strives to find out whether the popular medium is still attractive to the, by nature visual, younger population and whether there are differences in reception between the primary and secondary school pupils. Because it is about the exploitation of pupils' natural interests, the functional application of the comic strip potential in teaching is examined. High-quality examples express the poetic function of the hybrid discourse. Therefore, we use the comic strip *Alan Ford* as the template for our research because in Alan Ford the specific humour and self-irony create powerful vehicles of pictorial expression. The research is based in the assumption that, as a transcultural phenomenon, comic strip is present within various socio-cultural settings. Directed towards the functional use of comics, the study presents a contribution to the understanding of humour in a particular spatial frame, between the student populations of its consumers. At the same time, it is a contribution to the discussion about the efficient school, in which both students and teachers are satisfied.

The Efficiency of Laughter in Education and the Comic Strip Medium

When analyzing the position of laughter in our education, one notices how disassociated learning and play are in our culture. The two extremes rarely intertwine,

especially in the educational process, so the message is sent to pupils that cheerfulness and humour do not fit into the school space. Great changes have taken place in the new millennium, and these changes have marked everyday lives of the young. Hence, the ability to face changes and adjust to them has become one of the most important life skills of our time. Changes can be quite stressful, and humour can serve as the cognitive alternative (Peat, 2001). Laughter not only makes social communication easier but also, being an instinctive activity, can sophisticate the pedagogic system. Studying the important features of humour requires a multidisciplinary approach, and the role of humour and laughter is somewhat neglected in the scientific studies. In the body of pedagogic literature, few prominent works about the role of humour and laughter in the educational process can be found. Milan Matijević has dealt with the issue in a more systematic manner (1994). By analyzing the *sociology of fun*, the role and meaning of humour in the lives of the young, Relja and Baturina (2010) found that humour is most frequently used for fun, but also for resolving and overcoming arguments and conflicts.¹ Recent studies have presented the efficiency of humour as the defence mechanism in extremely stressful situations, and stress is the central feature of world education, and a natural reaction to the intensification of knowledge in education. According to Korobkin (1988), humour can reduce anxiety and anxious mood by changing the pupil's perception of the educational process. Appropriately used humour helps the teacher develop a better relationship with the students. On the condition that it is not excessive, it can increase their attention and interest by helping clarify the studied contents.² The readiness to use humour is considered to be a special social skill. Due to the lack of educational literature about the role of humour in educational communication, teachers have been sophisticating their teaching according to their own intuition, using their own cheerfulness and laughter.

Wittiness is an inherent characteristic of personality, and many teachers spontaneously use humour as an educational tool. But what of the teachers who do not have a pronounced sense of humour – are there techniques to be applied in teaching? What can be done to humanise and enrich the teacher-pupil communication with a humorous atmosphere? One of the possibilities is the implementation of comics, a popular medium which can provide the discourse of everyday life in the school programme.

¹ The authors of the research apostrophize the consciousness of the young about the therapeutic role of humour as well as its inevitable role in the school environment. According to the participants, humour influences the rise of the educational process quality, so it is not a mere vehicle of fun, but it improves inter/intragenerational relationships.

² Matijević and Miljević-Ričički (1994) examined the extent to which elementary and technical school teachers showed the sense of humour, i.e. they were interested in finding out whether there is a difference between teachers with reference to different schooling levels and gender. They found interesting results: college and secondary school students performed better – they showed greater sense of humour, technical subjects teachers scored higher in SUB tests in comparison with the primary school teachers, while there was no statistically significant difference in relation to the participants' gender differences.

Comic strip is an important literary-art medium of human childhood: a specific semiotic system that has an irreplaceable role in the communication of the youngest in general and in language learning, due to the fact that it is almost universal.³ The expansion of interface leads to the crisis of the printed media, comic strips being no exception.⁴ Since comics use text, design and various elements in creating meaning, they are appropriate for usage in high art, and the reader is always a co-creator because he/she participates in decoding the message. Alongside the negative connotations about the escapist character of the media⁵, which enables the young person to create a negative identification, we cannot ignore the fact that reading comics is a complex semiotic process. It is about the connotational system that, besides verbal language, consists of a visual component realised through iconic signs.⁶ It is only natural that the textual culture attacks the visual, which we encounter in the negative attitude towards pictures in books in general, and which is especially annoying when we try to foresee the pedagogic importance of visual memory. The newly created area of educational interest has resulted in creating new school curricula, which feature the use of comics in teaching.⁷

³ The questionnaires applied in primary school populations at the end of the 1980s and 1990s affirmed that students are mass consumers of comics. M. Kermek-Serdanović conducted a research in 1986, 'Senior Elementary School Student and Comic Book', in which she wanted to warn about the phenomenon of students reading outside school classes, the structure of reading which is not assigned, and is often unknown both to school and parents alike. It was found that comics are most frequent amongst the non-assigned reading, with children aged 11-14. In 1990, D. Lazić conducted a research which confirmed that in out-of-class reading the seventh graders preferred comics to the assigned reading in school. Both researchers have no doubts about incorporating comics into the teaching process. Interesting thoughts about the implementation of the popular media in classes have been offered by E. Millard and J. Marsh (*Department of Educational Studies, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK*). Their work was based on the research of children's interest in comics. In 1997, elementary students' reactions to borrowing comics in school libraries were studied. They concluded that reading comic strips provided everyday discourse, which could be put to use in motivating students in language teaching. Amongst many numerous observations, the thought that comics make children happier is recurrent, so an attractive media can become a non-traditional support to learning.

⁴ In his book *Literacy in the New Media Age*, a linguist Gunther Kress writes about the role of books in the post-modern era. He discusses literacy, which includes reading with all possible semiotically burdened meanings, and also reflects on the far reaching sociological and cultural consequences of media shifts. Speaking about the media of the new era, Kress applies post-modern view in the field of education, the view which says that language development must incorporate two different forms of communication. This is about motivating the belief that the reader, speaker or viewer can change the content of meaning in accordance with the variable context in which the sign is met, because social conventions can never determine meaning in the absolute sense. While the two logics merge, picture and text act together in the communication of meaning.

⁵ Comic strip medium has been treated differently through history, and often with negative aesthetic connotations. In 1992 Art Spiegelman's *Mouse* became the first comic book volume to ever win the Pulitzer Prize. After that, the public opinion that comic strip as a form, in its long-lasting development, has finally reached artistic maturity has prevailed. At the beginning of the 21st century, comic strip enters primary, secondary school and higher education programmes, as an additional tool for mastering social and natural sciences.

⁶ Semioticians call our attention upon the complex system of connotational units in comics. By its verbal and artistic means, it can connote different aesthetical and ideological values. By analyzing *Superman*, Umberto Eco proves that comic strip operates at the ideological level exactly: a flatly characterized superhero calls for relaxation and fun, in contrast to the series of comics based on the principle of wonder (*Asterix, the Smurfs, etc.*). Besides being a conventional sign, the speech bubble in comics is also an element of metalanguage, and readers accept the metalinguistic (stylistic) function of comic book discourse with ease.

⁷ The accelerated initiation of the study programmes devoted to the comic strip medium at universities all over the world makes publishers print appropriate magazines which follow the actual events with the media required dynamics. The English *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, recognises the natural interdisciplinary nature of comics, rendering all aspects of comics and drawn novels, with an emphasis on their cultural and creative meanings. The American web

Since wittiness is an important characteristic of an intelligent person, self-irony is considered the peak of one's sense of humour.⁸ Self-irony precisely is the trademark of the comic book *Alan Ford*, which unites its realistic elements and social satire with black humour. The grotesque rendering of the corrupted society through the gallery of unforgettable characters is of topical interest even today.⁹ The world of *Alan Ford* is polarised, and its poetics, like its drawing – black and white. The accentuated social opposites are introduced through extreme poverty (where the main characters belong), and the world of rich people and wealth. Unlike ordinary humour (which is its own purpose), the comic book's wittiness is in accordance with applied humour, the form designed for the hidden intentions of ironic provenance (Hanckok, 2004). The purpose of applied humour is very serious: since it pervades the setting of social interaction, the *alanfordian* humour can be seen as a constituent of social reality. In the era of fierce social changes, the comic strip's authors criticized class and social differences, ideological extremes and political immorality, with no holding back. The comic strip discourse underlies the thought of empty materialism, with the message that we do not need wealth to be happy and that we can live nicely in crisis as well. Since the focus of their critical edge is the individual above all, *Alan Ford* can be seen as the manifest of misanthropy of sorts.¹⁰ Despite numerous

magazine, *The Graphic Classroom*, promotes the use of high-quality comics in teaching, and in the educational vertical from primary school to college and university. Apart from promoting high-quality publications, it offers educators guidelines for researching the popular medium in the form of professional literature and text books about comics.

⁸ According to Matijević (1994), only intelligent and sufficiently actualized individuals have the ability of self-irony and telling jokes 'on themselves', so it would be desirable for all teachers to have these characteristics. Matijević has gathered understandings from his students, future teachers, of the role of humour in the teaching process. Students (260 subjects) were asked to assess the extent to which humour had been present in the overall teaching situation over the course of their twelve-year long schooling, and how important it was for their overall educational results in school. Students claimed that teachers who gave great significance to funny teaching situations were rare. Almost 40 % of the subjects considered humour in their schooling insufficient, and if and when it was present, it was initiated by students themselves, by their funny looks or statements. The answers of most subjects lead to the conclusion that teachers who use humour for creating pleasant atmosphere in teaching, and for initiating students' creativity, were rare.

⁹ In Croatia, a rich comic book production had its golden era in the seventies and eighties. The comic book *Alan Ford*, presented by two authors – the cartoonist Magnus (Roberto Raviola) and the scriptwriter Bunker (Lucciano Secchi), was created in the specific social context, in the era of liberalism and general rebellion against the imperial tendencies of the West and the totalitarianism of the East. Although it became part of the popular culture, by its large edition, unlike other Bonelli publications, *Alan Ford* has gained the status of the collector's comic strip by its wide reception. The sarcastic way of looking at everyday life and the black humour became the trademarks of the classical comic strip. Despite the poor initial results, the publisher Editoriale Corno had not given up on the series publication, which was proven to be the right move two years later: the edition rose to 100,000 copies. The comic strip of a recognisable visual identity owes its popularity to the characteristic Raviola's drawing style and the unusual pocket book format (22 x 14 centimetres), with two frames on one page. Imagined as a parody of the popular spy genre and James Bond, the comic strip inaugurates the heroes of the 'secret organization', the code-named *Group TNT*, which is completely opposite to the Agent 007. Unlike the charming secret agent, who solves the hardest cases easily, the *Group TNT* members are a poor group of dilantans who, despite their incredible clumsiness, manage to solve complicated cases. The comic strip captures our attention with its philosophy of life and black humour: the story is based on the tension between the two worlds – when the rich and the poor come into contact, hilarious situations take place.

¹⁰ The great translations provided by the Croatian publicist and author Nenad Brixly, who thrilled the readers with juicy colloquial idioms, contributed to the comic strip's popularity in former Yugoslavia. As the content of the comics was based on word games, Brixly handled it in many ways: he used archaisms (i.e. *Who's making such an inconsiderate noise?*), jargonisms (i.e. writing on the can, *Coke just a breeze, more hard cheese!*), using the liberty of translating, and in doing so he did not interfere with the authenticity of the original (the writing on Grunf's T-shirt, *As soon as you see a ghost, get wasted on PIK beer*). The scriptwriter Secchi himself once acknowledged him for the contribution he gave to making *Alan Ford* so popular in former Yugoslavia.

historical and political changes which have taken place in the recent years, *Alan Ford* loses no popularity, which affirms that TNT group is not only the product of the Italian imaginarium, but much more than that.¹¹

Since children are visual by nature, humour and empathy of the *Alan Ford* comic strip could be appropriate methodological tools for learning new educational contents. In that context, the use of popular media in the classroom should be seen as the exploitation of the student's natural interests.

Research Methodology

Within the empirical research, attention was directed towards the role and meaning of humour in the teaching process. This goal was elaborated through a special aim, which referred to the functional use of the comic strip medium. Efforts were made to examine whether there were differences in the reception of the *Alan Ford* comic strip between different age groups of primary and secondary school pupils as well as the deviations referring to the subjects' gender. The examination of the importance of humour as a desired teacher's characteristic was incorporated into the research. In accordance with the assumption that the comic strip is a transcultural phenomenon, the following hypotheses were set:

- students will show tendency towards humour in class;
- considering the fact that work which corresponds to their experience is close to the young, subjects will show propensity towards the popular comic strip medium;
- students will value the teacher's wittiness positively, as an inherent human characteristic.

The role of humour in teaching and its reception amongst the school population were examined by means of the Pearson Chi-square and Fisher exact tests, and the quantitative methodological approach was applied. The questionnaire method was applied on a random sample of students. The questionnaire was based on the students' statements about their opinions and attitudes.

The hypothetical model of the interaction between the examined variables can be graphically presented as follows:

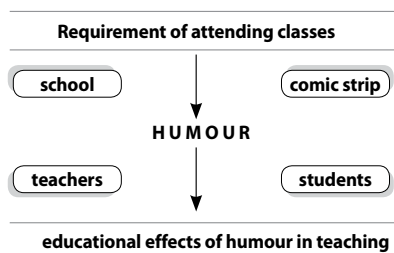


Chart 1. *Humour*

¹¹ The question which imposes itself is: what does comic strip owe its long-lasting popularity to? Besides its specific charm, the comic strip is popular even today, because its aspects can influence recipients more than before. During the seventies, Croatia was confronted with the first signs of private ownership, disproportions in economy and a growing number of the unemployed, so comics had a comforting effect on the averagely frustrated reader. Thirty years later, bipolarisation of the society was still present. Readers (particularly in the urban settings) can easily identify themselves with the heroes of the TNT group.

Sample

A total of 14 schools from Primorsko-Goranska County participated in the research; 7 primary schools (primary schools *Turnić, Vežica, Vladimir Gortan, Ivan Zajc, Kostrena, Gornja Vežica and Eugen Kumičić*) and 7 secondary technical and grammar schools (*Mijo Mirković High School of Economics, Salesian Classical Grammar School, Mechanical School for Industrial and Crafts Vocations, Electro-Industrial and Crafts School, Andrija Mohorovičić Grammar School, First Croatian Grammar School of Rijeka and Medical School in Rijeka*). The subjects were divided into two sub-samples – eight-graders and seniors, i.e. students of final grades of secondary schools. The sub-samples were proportionally represented, while subjects were quite evenly represented with regard to their gender: 182 primary school pupils (83 girls and 99 boys) and 172 secondary school students (81 girls and 91 boys). Due to the fact that grammar schools had both genders equally represented, we included technical schools with mostly male (*Mechanical School for Industrial and Crafts Vocations, Electro-Industrial and Crafts School*), or female student populations (*Mijo Mirković High School of Economics, Medical School*) with the purpose of achieving greater objectivity. The total number of pupils participating in the research was 354. All the pupils lived in similar socio-economic conditions and attended schools in urban environments.

Besides the author, a total of 20 interviewers, all teachers, participated in the research. The qualitative approach, as the fundamental method in data collection, consisted of the preliminary reading of the *Alan Ford* episode entitled "Number 1". In the first set of qualitative data, the impressions of the comic strip were registered. The empirical data was gathered immediately after the students had read the comic strip. The aim was to find out the students' impressions of the *Alan Ford* episode, and which subjective meanings they attributed to the perceived content. So, one of the special goals was met, the one which integrated the higher understanding processes and meanings which students assigned to the popular printed media. The designed instrument rendered the combination of open-ended and closed questions, and the questionnaire consisted of 12 questions. Two questions consisted of claims to which subjects could answer positively ("yes") or negatively ("no"). In the second set of qualitative data, the experiential attitudes about teaching staff and the use of humour were noted. The questionnaire was filled during class time, and it was anonymous. The examination was implemented during Croatian language classes, and the field phase of the research was executed during the period of time from May 2011 to March 2012, within the spatial frame of Rijeka.

Analysis of the Research

Primary and secondary school students' attitudes about comic strip reception and the possibility of its implementation in teaching are not uniform. To determine the differences between the eight-graders and seniors, Fisher exact test ($p=0.003$) was applied, the results of which are represented in Table 1. To the first question, *Do you like reading comics?*, 253 students gave affirmative answers, which is 72 % of the research sample, and 101 students answered negatively. The difference in the comic strip reception

between primary and secondary school pupils was significant – the eight-graders were greater advocates of comic strip reading, in relation to the students from the final secondary school grades. Within the senior group, there was no statistically significant difference found between students in technical schools and grammar schools.

Table 1. Distribution of answers according to gender and age

Do you like reading comics?	Gender				Level			
	Male		Female		Primary school		Secondary school	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
yes	149	78	104	63	143	79	110	64
no	41	22	60	37	39	21	62	36
total	190		164		182		172	

Although significant differences in average values were not found, an important difference in the explanatory answers provided in the questionnaire was determined. The subjects were not uniform in stating the reasons for which they *like/do not like* reading comics. Comic strip advocates accentuated the curiosity and wittiness of the comic strip discourse, the bond between the text and the picture, the text being undemanding and brief, the relaxing and fun character of the media, etc. Conversely, attitudes about the irreplaceability of the medium which is no longer in fashion were prevalent, and so were the observations about the lack of the habitual reading of comics. Female students stated that they preferred reading books, while the desire for fun and action was an item which most frequently occurred in the responses of male subjects.

In the second question, *How did you like the episode "Number 1"?*, the subjects had been offered the following answers to choose from: a) *I liked it a lot*, b) *It was not bad* and c) *I did not like it at all*. The results are shown in Table 2. Boys expressed their significantly greater enthusiasm about the comics (Pearson Chi-square test, $df=2$, $c^2=6.73$, $p=0.034$), while girls were more reserved. The results were similar with regard to the comparison of the answers according to the educational age level – the percentage of the primary school pupils who were more zealous about the comic strip was significantly greater than the percentage of the secondary school pupils who liked the comic strip (Pearson Chi-square test, $df=2$, $c^2=23.48$, $p<0.001$).

Table 2. Distribution of answers according to gender and age

How did you like the 1 st episode?	Gender				Level			
	Male		Female		Primary school		Secondary school	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very much	88	46	57	35	96	53	49	28
Not bad	93	49	91	55	79	43	105	61
Did not like at all	9	5	16	10	7	4	18	10

The reflections of the pupils about the comic strip expression are particularly interesting. In the explanation of our choice, we will single out the most frequent observations of the interviewed pupils: *it's funny and interesting, with great drawings;*

because it's witty and fun; there is a lot of action and adventures; I find the anecdotes and the tension in the comic strip fun; the characters are interesting; because the comic strip is educational; intelligent humour, wonderful drawing and vitality of the characters (primary schools), the story is interesting, the way it's accompanied with picture; it portrays life situations comically; it's interesting, drawings are great; it's funny and easily read; I liked the caricatured portrayal of reality; I generally love Alan Ford; it's funny and educational (secondary schools). A smaller number of subjects circled the answer c) *I did not like it at all*, so some more comprehensive explanations are omitted. We will single out only two observations: *I didn't really understand it* (Primary School Ivan Zajc), *it's too childish* (Mijo Mirković School of Economics).

The next two questions were also directed towards the review of students' impressions. Amongst the answers about what they liked about *Alan Ford*; a) *drawing*, b) *story* or c) *both* – 127 subjects preferred the drawing, the story was singled out by 31 subjects, and as many as 196 subjects (55%) chose both components of the comic strip. Considering the age groups, the preference of the secondary school students for illustration was notable, while the eight-graders liked the drawing and the story equally well (33%). The answers differed according to gender: girls liked the drawing significantly more than boys, and boys chose the 'drawing and story' option more often (Pearson χ^2 test, $\chi^2=15.13$, $df=2$ $p<0.001$). With regard to the level of education, no significant difference in the answers was noted (Pearson χ^2 test, $\chi^2=5.22$, $df=2$ $p=0.073$).

In the triple choice of possibilities, *The comic strip made me: a) laugh, b) sad or c) annoyed*, most subjects said that it had made them *laugh* (301 answers or 85 %), answer *b)* was selected by 12 subjects, and answer *c) annoyed* was chosen by 41 subjects (12%). With regard to gender, a greater percentage of boys than girls felt that the comic strip made them laugh (90 % vs. 79 %), and a greater percentage of girls was annoyed by it – 16 % of the girls vs. 8 % of the boys (Pearson χ^2 test, $\chi^2=8.00$, $df=2$ $p=0.018$). There were no significant differences in the answers with regard to gender. In their explanations, students stated the reasons for their choices. Those whom the comic strip amused said that: *the comic strip has humorous parts, and the pictures were convincing; it portrays some things and situations which would be very serious in real life, in a really funny way; there are good jokes; because of the funny characters and their behaviour; it's well drawn; because the characters are laughable and fun; funny dialogues and unusual situations; because it's full of humour and the drawing is fantastic* (primary schools), *because of the funny dialogues; because of the satirical view of the world; because of lots of irony and sarcasm; because it's funny and criticises society; drawing and dialogue combined; because of great action and original characters; it mocks life situations; for the funny and somewhat confused characters; pictures are original, as is the comic strip content itself* (secondary schools). The explanations of the students who were "annoyed" by the comic strip are interesting: *I don't like reading fiction* (Economic school); *I don't like Alan Ford; I don't like reading comics; it's really strange* (Gornja Vežica). One grammar school student, who was saddened by the comic strip, explained – *it's sad, the world we live in*.

As the answer to the question, *What is the authors', Magnus and Bunker's, intention?*, students mostly chose option c) *It is a critique of social weaknesses*, in 160 cases (47%), answer a) *to entertain*, in 127 cases (36%), and answer b) *to educate the readers*, in 67 cases (19%). There were no significant differences in the distribution of the answers with regard to gender (Pearson χ^2 test, $\chi^2=3.89$, $df=2$ $p=0.143$), or according to age (no differences, Pearson χ^2 test, $\chi^2=2.29$, $df=2$ $p=0.328$).

The seventh question was directed toward the actualisation of the popular media: *Can comic strip 'Alan Ford' help us understand the world we live in better?* As many as 286 subjects, or 81%, answered affirmatively. With regard to gender, a somewhat greater portion of girls than boys answered affirmatively (136 or 83% of the girls vs. 150 or 79% of the boys, which is not a statistically significant difference, $p=0.343$). According to age, affirmative answers were given by a somewhat greater portion of the secondary school students (142 or 83% vs. 144 or 79% primary school students, which is also not significant, $p=0.411$). Subjects were not uniform in the reasons they gave for which comic strip *could/could not* be used in class. Although no significant differences were found in the average values, a still important difference between the explanatory answers given in the questionnaire was determined. The list of those determiners is wide, so we state only the ones that are more frequent in both age groups:

The explanations which accompanied the answer "YES": *because they portray the real image of life* (N=67); *it shows the society we live in through irony* (N=29), *because it has a moral and it's educational* (N=25), *it indicates great injustices, greed and inequality in today's society* (N=21), *because we can understand the lesson we're learning more easily* (N=12), etc. The explanations which involved the "NO" answer were rarer, so we will give them all: *everything in the comic strip is unreal; it's just a comic with imaginary characters; it has no deeper meaning; we must create our opinion of the world ourselves, no comic strip is going to help us do that* (primary schools), *because it's like a fairytale for kids; because it's written to entertain the readers; no, it's only funny; it doesn't reveal anything new;* (secondary schools).

The next question was aimed at finding out students' attitudes toward the functionality of the comic strip in education. Students were given double solutions to choose from: a) *comic strips do not belong in schools* and b) *comic strips can be used in teaching*. Most subjects, 308 students or the high 87% percent, were of the opinion that comics can be used in teaching, while only 46 (13%) considered they should not have a place in school. The opinions did not differ according to gender, but they varied with regard to age (Pearson χ^2 test, $\chi^2=4.42$, $df=2$ $p=.035$). Secondary school students thought comic strip was less useful in the teaching process. Their answers differed significantly from the answers of the primary school pupils. The data is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of answers according to gender and age

It is my opinion that ...	Gender				Level			
	Male		Female		Primary school		Secondary school	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Comic strip does not belong in school	29	16	17	10	17	9	29	17
Comic strip can be used in the teaching process	161	85	147	90	165	91	143	83
total	190		164		182		172	

Students could also explain their views.¹² The observations of those students who were opposed to using comics in school were particularly interesting. We will provide some examples: *'this is a serious institution, not a kindergarten'* (Medical School), *'because they don't ask you that on the state school-leaving examination'* (Salesian Classical Grammar School).

The 9th question followed: *Write in what way can Alan Ford, or some other comic strip, be used in the teaching process.* Besides the expected answers about the fun character of the comics and the discontinuation of monotony in the school space, the list is a bit broad, so we state the items which are more frequent in both age groups: *because they can be instructional and also funny to students (N=60), because the comic strip is cool and it's fun to read (N=42), learning through jokes (N=32), it would refresh classes and positively affect students (N=16), comics can prompt discussion about the actual issues and problems (N=12), it can facilitate the understanding of the matter, because learning with the help of comics is easier (N=10), etc.* Secondary school students warn us of their own interests (*'Classes must teach us about everyday life, just as the comic strip does'*, (Andrija Mohorovičić Grammar School), and the use of comics for entertainment in class. Many subjects think that popular media is more interesting than assigned reading, so it can replace the required reading of literary works. Most frequent are the following two opinions: *many things and dialogues from the comic strip can be very educational, and they are more interesting than the written text, so verbal-art statement can serve as assigned reading, for retelling, as school reading, etc.*

The next question is directly linked to the previous one: *In which teaching area and part of a lesson could the teacher use comic strips?* The range of answers and educational areas which pupils mentioned was very broad: almost all the subjects were covered, from Croatian to religious education and form teacher class. Some educational areas were represented in students' answers more – in primary school art and history – than others. However, as had been expected, the most represented area was mother tongue: as many as 76 primary and 56 secondary school pupils would use comics in the classes

¹² We are citing interesting pupils' observations: *because at the same time we could learn and have fun, which would be great; there are different genres – a lot can be learned and memorised more easily; because comics would refresh classes; because it's educational and not hard; when the teacher wants to show off (primary schools).* Secondary school students also had interesting observations: *because it can facilitate the understanding of the matter; learning about serious and complicated issues is more fun; for amusement in class, etc.*

of Croatian language and literature. After Croatian (N=132), by the number of votes, are media culture (N=27) and history (N=15). Students particularly emphasised the closeness of the language-art field: *comics can be used in literature – with the goal of providing students relaxation from heavy reading; in a way that teacher interprets the comic strip to students; we can work with them as we do with any other text from our reading-books; it can be read and we can comment on what we have read; fun for students and discussion as assigned reading; it can be compared to some examples from literature; to draw a parallel with realism (critique of society, comparison of good and bad); to show a process interestingly, this comic strip could be analysed in Croatian classes and we could draw a moral from it, etc.* When they talked about the stages in a lesson, students named numerous possibilities, from the introductory part of the lesson (*at the beginning of the class, for motivation; because we can be motivated in an interesting way; it can help the student become interested in some topic*), the middle part (*in literature – the whole lesson*), to the final part of the lesson (*to relax at the end of the class*).

In the other group of qualitative data, the subjects' experiential attitudes about teachers' and their use of humour were registered. To the question, *Do you like funny teachers and why?*, apart from 4 subjects, all the other students answered positively! The attitude of the young towards witty teachers was analysed in more detail and the subjects' statements were sorted according to the most frequent observations, with the goal of creating individual groups which were homogenous with regard to the degree in which certain attitudes were expressed.

Most frequent statements of the eight-graders: *witty teachers make me learn and listen more (N=21); yes, because classes aren't boring then (N=18); I like them because they make me relax, and then I master the matter more easily (N=18); classes are more interesting, so it makes time pass more quickly (N=12); because they make classes fun (N=10); yes, because it's easier to talk to them (N=10); they reduce tension in class (N=8), etc.*

Here are the most frequent statements of the secondary school students: *I like them because students are also more relaxed then/the atmosphere in class is better and students feel well (N=18); because they are more relaxed and communication with such teachers is better (N=15); the atmosphere in class is better and students feel good (N=14); yes, they are funnier and more accessible than the others (N=10); I like them because they present the matter in a fun way, so it makes us memorise it easier (N=8); yes, because they make a boring matter interesting (N=8); they want the atmosphere to be pleasant, and to be closer with the students (N=7); I like them because there aren't many, and they make classes more interesting (N=6), because humour can draw my attention to some serious matters (N=5), etc.*

Some correlations are statistically more significant, which confirms the interrelations of the analysed groups of problems connected with the monotonousness/seriousness of the teaching conceptions. The most significant statistical connection between subjects in primary and secondary schools is visible amongst the factors that represent the opinion about the efficiency of witty teachers, from which the conclusion follows

that the way in which humorous teachers work is, in high percentages, particularly agreeable with the students. In that assessment, there is almost no difference between the eight-graders and seniors, nor is there a difference with regard to the subjects' gender. There are only two observations with negative connotations in reference to witty teachers: *Not really, because we wouldn't learn anything* (Primary School E. Kumičić); *No, they annoy me* (First Croatian Grammar School of Rijeka).

In the last question, students were asked to state their attitudes towards witty teachers: *Do you think that teachers who joke in class are not serious, so you cannot learn a lot from them?* Here, as well, both age groups answered negatively in high percentage. Only two students answered affirmatively (Mechanical School for Industrial and Crafts Vocations), agreeing that those teachers are inefficient. We will state a few observations provided by the eight-graders: *no, if they are strict and serious, no one listens to them; no, in that way I learn better because I'm not under pressure; no, it's just a way the teacher tries to get close to us students; no, I think such teachers are the best, because they try to make their students laugh first, and then they start their lesson; no, because they just want to cheer up the students...* Secondary school students also grade witty teachers positively: *no, indeed, by it they break the monotony which is overwhelming anyway, and students have more fun and are more relaxed; sometimes you should make jokes; Indeed, we can learn more from them; no, I think teachers have to be a bit unserious, it is easier to learn; I like them because they are funny and it makes the lesson go by faster! no, you can learn a lot through humour; no, they are just relaxed and do their job better; nooo!; no, on the contrary, they are interesting, so we prefer listening to them; absolutely not; no, they are just trying to create a better atmosphere so students would be more active in class; Just the opposite – children memorise and learn the matter more easily in such a way; with the help of jokes we memorise more easily; because humour always comes in handy, etc.*

Unlike the uniform attitudes of the interviewed eight-graders and seniors, the rare positive answers of the interviewed subjects who believed that witty teachers could not teach them a lot, mostly indicate the critical mockery and ridicule of students by educators: *it depends on the extent to which they joke with the students, it's important not to overdo it and gain authority* (primary school); *no, if they joke for a short time, but if they joke the whole lesson, then you can't learn a lot from them; yes, if the jokes aren't polite; if the whole period goes by in jesting, yes, I think they aren't serious; yes, if they have no limitations* (secondary school). The provided answers point to the fact that humour can have negative effects if it is used in the context of mockery and ridicule.

Discussion

On the overall, the results of the questionnaire showed that students were quite interested in reading comics, so it can be said that the results of the research confirmed the expectations and hypotheses. Differences in the comic strip reception with regard to the age and gender are visible. The eight-graders were greater advocates of comic

strip reading than were the secondary school students. Such results can be interpreted with regard to their age interests – in puberty students show interest in the comic strip medium, while in the more mature, adolescent age, this interest weakens. Many answers point to the positive reception of the comic strip template between the grammar students and the fourth-year “male” technical schools (*Electro-Industrial and Crafts School*), which is not the case with the students from the *Mijo Mirković School of Economics, Medical School in Rijeka* and the three-year long *Mechanical School for Industrial and Crafts Vocations*, whose ratio of positive and negative attitudes is almost proportional. Some possible reasons for such a ratio are a weakened interest in comics in predominantly female populations as well as the reluctance to perceive ironic humour, which demands an active reader and a certain intellectual effort. The finding that boys were greater advocates of comics than girls, especially in primary schools had also been expected. The research established that amongst the main motives the “desire for fun and action” was more emphasized in the population of boys, while girls preferred the visual likeability and the possibility of relaxation, alongside the sensation of comfort.

Particularly interesting were the reflections of the young, and their impressions about the comic strip expression: most subjects liked the episode ‘Number 1’ (in that the eight-graders were in the lead, with a high percentage of the answer ‘*I liked it a lot*’), which confirms the positive attitude of students towards the black-humoured novel. To the question what they liked in the comic strip and what mood it arose in them, the subjects did not name all the comic strip elements equally. With regard to the age groups, the secondary school students’ tendency towards illustration was notable, while the eight-graders liked the story equally well. So, the story and the drawing were the most impressionable features of *Alan Ford* as far as most of the eight-graders were concerned. When we think about the provided answers, we notice that secondary school students, alongside the specific humorous discourse, were impressed by the art facet of the expression. Apart from the informative function, *Alan Ford’s* illustrations had an aesthetic function as well. Feedback indicated that mostly girls had given importance to the aesthetic function of illustration.

The episode ‘Number 1’ made most subjects laugh, which proved the positive comic strip reception amongst primary and secondary school pupils, and confirmed the hypothesis that students react to the laughable discourse of *Alan Ford*. Comments about the comic strip heroes showed that those students had, in the earlier phase of schooling, developed the ability of providing ethical and social description of the characters. Since the poetic function of hybrid discourse is noticeable in the high-quality comic strips, the language of *Alan Ford*, by the original corpus, becomes the central macro-stylem of the popular comic strip. Many students singled out the textual component of *Alan Ford* precisely as the greatest asset of the comic strip, naming numerous examples, like the sentence of one of the heroes in the story, ‘*It’s better to live a hundred years as a rich man than seven days of poverty!*’ So, the peculiar comic strip discourse is easily decoded. Irony and sarcasm are close to the young because they

use humour as a certain type of rebellion against the confusing reality that surrounds them. The protagonists of the drawn adventures are lively characters full of faults, but likeable and resourceful, so the readers can easily relate to them. As the authors constantly remind us of that fact, the act of reading becomes a sort of catharsis, and has a powerful therapeutic role. Besides, joke as a manifestation of humour in *Alan Ford* serves as a corrective, a sort of an explanation of contradictions (Davies, 1984).

Well spotted by the subjects were the intentions of the comic strip authors, their critical edge towards social injustice and the '*criticism of the social weaknesses*'. A dominant percentage of the answers indicated that pupils had recognised the layer of ideas in the text. They were also conscious of the fact that the popular comic strip, besides its escapist-fun character, also had the awareness component, judging the social segregation. That dimension of the comics' discourse was recognised by the age groups, the eight-graders and seniors alike. But, students were not uniform in stating the reasons for which they thought that comic strip *could/could not* be used in classes. Those who agreed with the possibility of the implementation of the comic strip into teaching found that it was educational and it could help students develop their own attitudes to a certain problem. The negative answers of the eight-graders indicated the conservativeness of the school system, which does not motivate the young to be critically aware of the valorisation of the extracurricular contents, while the answers provided by the secondary school students emphasized the infantilism and the fun character of the relaxation literature.

Most subjects agreed with the thesis that comics can be practically used in classes, stating its popularity with the young. They are fun, but also have an educational character and respect students' interests, with regard to lessening the monotony of teaching and heightening the entertainment when learning a demanding new matter. As opposed to the affirmative attitude towards print, the minority that felt the opposite found reading comics to be a waste of time, because it was not educational enough, so it could not serve the educational purposes. Besides, the effort around 'this kind of literature' would not be evaluated in classes, or in the state A-level examination (GCE). However, the opinion of one eight-grade student – '*it's more fun learning with humour and jokes*,' should not leave any educator feeling indifferent. Many stated it would be interesting to read comics in school, because the young can deal with problems more easily through laughter, and the gap between school and life's reality is lessened. When we talk about educational fields, almost all subjects are mentioned, so the discussion will look more closely upon the opinions about the possibility of the implementation of the comic strip in teaching.

It was expected for the Croatian language to be the most represented field – many subjects stated Croatian as an ideal school subject for the implementation of the comic strip. Students gave examples of the practical use of comics, and most answers were directed toward the contents of the assigned reading, showing that the eight-graders and seniors perceived comics as a good alternative to school reading. Reflecting on

various approaches to the interpretation of literary text, students' tendencies should not be neglected, but in the course of literature classes comics should be used as an interesting teaching vehicle in the development of reading interests, especially amongst the population of the eight-graders.¹³ Teachers can use humorous interpretations of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* or Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in *Alan Ford*, to motivate students for reading the world literature classics. The problem of school reading in the teaching practice was not the focus of this study,¹⁴ but it should be emphasised that the results of this research also indicated the need for reviewing the school reading content, as well as the working methods, in motivating the reading culture amongst primary and secondary school pupils.

Comic strip issues of high-quality which are favoured by students, as *Alan Ford* is, can easily be integrated into the core of the media culture. Besides the integration into the programme of the Croatian language, the field of media culture is a separate optional subject in some schools (Salesian Classical Gymnasium). Apart from the fact that positive observations about the comic strip language confirmed the initial hypothesis about students' tendencies towards popular print, the provided answers offered the possibility of including students into observing interesting linguistic interactions: through the interpretation of comics students will also notice the stylistic possibilities of their language code. The eight-graders stated that in the history class they could read comics, which could also serve as alternative classes. Naming the field of history is not surprising, because comic strip offers numerous possibilities of pictorial representation of the educational content ('in history class we could read historical comics'; inserted *Number 1's stories – for example, about Odyssey; through character analysis – educational for relaxation; in history, when Number 1 tells his version of a historical event*). An important element of *Alan Ford* is a specific view of the important historical events from Number 1's viewpoint, the TNT group leader: in a Derridean manner, authors deconstruct historical factography by offering a funny version of a certain event.¹⁵

¹³ In the eighth grades, comics can be used in comparative analysis, with the literary original after which it was created. In this way, pupils will, besides being motivated to read, learn about specific visual media (Maurović's comics were made after literary originals – *With Fire and Sword, Beware of the Hand of Senj*). Methodological work with comics consists of the comparative analysis in which the similarities and differences between the comic strip and the literary sample are compared. After that, tasks for individual work and creative expression follow. This methodological model confirms just how delicate a drawing discipline the comic strip is, the one that, with its art, affects the psychic processes positively as well.

¹⁴ Ten years ago, I participated in the research of the secondary school students' reading interests (Lazzarich 2001, 2004). To the question what would, in their mind, make school reading more interesting, second grade students stated that the themes of literary texts should be close to the young, they should have more humour and action. In choosing the most favoured titles, they showed interest in love themes (*The Sorrows of Young Werther*), and humour which is dear and close to the young (*Landlady Mirandolina*). Literature rich in humour motivates the young to spend even their free time with books. Besides the fun and pleasant moods, which such literature evokes, it stimulates the intellect, facilitating the understanding of the meaning and the philosophy of life for the young.

¹⁵ In their interpretation, for example, the glorious Leonida 'dies heroically' in the Thermopylaen gorge, stopping the Persian invasion by cowardly running away, but gets stuck in a gorge because of his enormous fatness. Through the funny dioptré of the Italian authors marched the whole gallery of historical figures, such as Homer, Charles the Great, Julius Caesar, Jean Lafitte, General Custer and others.

When reflecting on the teaching phases, students incorporated almost all the lesson's stages into their observations. Humorous discourse can be realised in various stages of the teaching process. It is particularly useable in the motivation phase: besides creating a positive atmosphere, the cheerful beginning of the class with a joke and laughter helps students relax, while witty pauses during classes provide them with short breaks, it is welcome during intensive intellectual efforts. In the central part of the lesson, during the work on new educational content and the evaluation of knowledge, funny examples can lessen the anxiety during the intellectually demanding examinations (McMorris, Urbach, and Connor, 1985). Further research could, for example, determine the reasons for which students in male technical schools more often positively assess the use of comics in teaching than their peers in the predominantly 'female' schools.

The other group of qualitative data offered interesting experiential reflections of subjects about teachers and their use of humour. Almost a hundred percent uniformity of primary and secondary school students' attitudes confirmed the extent to which the students' perceptions of teachers were significantly determined by their sense of humour. By that fact, humour itself strongly defines the connections between the participants in the teaching process. Speaking of the efficiency of classes, observations of the eight-graders and seniors showed that the way witty teachers work particularly agrees with the students, in a high percentage. Their answers confirm the inclination towards funny teachers. Because of that, the subjects show more trust towards teachers who are in favour of laughter. Heartiness and humour are a prerequisite of high-quality relationships and peaceful co-existence in the classroom environment.¹⁶ Almost everyone agrees with the thought that the tendency toward jokes and laughter would not have negative consequences on the educational achievements. The research in schools in Rijeka correlated with the results of European and world methodologists.¹⁷ In the minds of students, teachers who use humour are far more efficient in the mediation of the educational content. The young are aware of the extent to which jitters and fear can be an impediment to acquiring knowledge and learning, so the teacher's humour significantly influences the final success. The eight-graders and high school students agreed on one thing – if the teacher managed to achieve a motivating atmosphere, students would probably be more interested in learning. Humour is a motivator and a sort of a catalyst for positive engagement in the process of instruction. The most prevalent were almost uniform affirmative attitudes about

¹⁶ Researching similar issues, Sprecher and Regan (2002) argued that the intrinsic characteristics, such as openness, kindness and the sense of humour, are most desired within all types of relationships. Mannell and McMahon (1982) state that humour can function as a short 'efficient game' (*play – activity*), which can be implemented during classes, and emphasize the connection between humour as an activity and mental health. In the school environment, adjustable teachers use humour, and in doing so raise the quality of their pupils' work a lot faster than those who do not use humour. Bryant et al. (1980) emphasized that pupils perceive witty teachers as better lecturers than those who do not use humour.

¹⁷ Gotham and Christophel (1990), using a bigger sample, did not find any negative attitudes about teachers who use humour during instruction. It was found that teachers who regularly include humour in classes transfer the subject matter in question more efficiently (Downs, Javidi, and Nussbaum, 1988).

witty educators. Rare negative observations shed light on the darker side of the non-pedagogical approach, and indicated critical mockery and ridicule of students on the part of educators. Laughter in the classroom can also have negative effects if it is used for derision, mockery, as a source of prejudice and such. This is the destructive side of humour: embarrassment and sarcastic derision are its forms with a negative foretold.¹⁸ These examples do not belong within the desired human interaction. The benevolence of laughter is an important feature which makes humour a positive and desirable social phenomenon.

Students' attitudes acknowledged the fact that the young lack the comfort which would indirectly affirm the sense of freedom and pleasure in the school space. This has to do with the important aspect of the values system of the young person. The subjects' assessment of the meaning of humour and the importance of the free atmosphere in the student-teacher relationships makes us think. They also warn educators about behaviour correction in class.

The application of the published materials containing funny elements, such as *Alan Ford*, can be particularly effective.¹⁹ The educators could use young people's tendency to like comics and transfer its visual-literary potential into their classrooms. Comic strip humorous discourse initiates positive psycho-social atmosphere, by that very fact being the inspiration for receiving the content in humorous form, more expressed than the usual one, by which the efficiency in the communication process is enlarged (Ilić, 1988).

Conclusion

A good sense of humour is very desirable within interpersonal relationships in the educational process. The research in the 14 schools in Rijeka confirmed positive subjects' attitudes towards witty teachers. The research results showed that humour is particularly important for affirming communication and establishing trust in teaching. With their cheerfulness and wittiness teachers create a more pleasant working environment, which leads to better cooperation. A frequent cause of the devaluation of educational humour lies in teachers who lack creativity, do not have a sense of humour or are indifferent to it. The results also indicated a diminished interest in the comic strip medium, with respect to the previous decades, especially amongst the age groups of subjects from secondary schools. Unlike their older colleagues, pupils in primary schools showed greater interest for the popular medium, so its functional

¹⁸ Matijević (1994) mentions '*pedagogic zoology*', which teachers sometimes use to publicly label their pupils by naming them mockery nicknames and epithets. In verbal conflict, pupils do not hold back, and each generation enriches this unbound pedagogic vocabulary.

¹⁹ In the eighth grades of primary school, comic strips can be used in different ways: as linguistic and methodological templates they include the ability to use imagination in contents which normally do not offer that possibility (e.g. grammar), with the function of reading capacities development comic strips can be presented as alternative material, with regards to the traditional text books, as the motivation for creative thought and involving reading skills. In the integrated approach, the comic strip becomes a powerful methodological vehicle, so this artistic form gets its full meaning in teaching. Stjepko Težak emphasised the motivating strengths of comics in the development of the communicative competences, always bearing in mind the overall educational vertical.

use in teaching should be reflected on. Comic strip stimulates the atmosphere of joy and comfort in the classroom, which creates the possibility of stronger emotional connections between pupils and teachers. In the curricula planning, it is advisable to strive towards creative teaching strategies, in order to establish easier and more successful communication in the *teacher-subject matter-pupil* triad. The contents of various constituent sciences are incorporated into the methodological field of the Croatian language (Bežen, 2008), so the comic strip discourse is given as a dietary methodological instrument in the teaching process. In that context, the methodology of comics should by no means be neglected, because examples of high art levels, such as *Alan Ford*, have numerous advantages which can be used in classes. In primary school, comic strip is close to the linguistic-art field, so the possibilities of its implementation are in the areas of Croatian and art above all, while at the secondary school level it is useable in the educational fields of history and media culture. With respect to the traditional paradigm, the methodology of comics offers the following contemporary procedures: promoting the pupil's personality and respecting his/her educational needs, integrating content from various subjects and methodological diversity in teaching. With its metaphoric subtlety, *Alan Ford*, in primary school, can help the young understand the world that surrounds them. The results of the conducted empirical research affirm the foundation of the cited theoretical considerations. The closeness and appropriateness of the popular medium enlarges the openness of the educational process, classes become an interesting and dynamic process, and the classroom a place of multidirectional communication and freedom of expression. Teachers can decide for themselves how to use the popular medium as a creative teaching tool, because the humorous discourse of comics can add to the stimulating atmosphere in the school space, affirming the principles of contemporary methodology that learning with joy is not a mere rhetoric.

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Humor i empatija stripa kao metodološki instrumentarij u poučavanju

Sažetak

Smijeh je instinktivna aktivnost koja osim što olakšava društvenu komunikaciju, može oplemeniti i pedagoški sustav. Budući da su djeca po prirodi usmjerena vizualnoj percepciji, humor i empatija stripa pogodni su metodološki instrumentarij za usvajanje novih obrazovnih sadržaja. Strip Alan Ford objedinjuje realističke elemente sa socijalnom satirama i crnim humorom, a svoju popularnost i dugovječnost zahvaljuje kreativnosti svojih autora koji su samoironiju prihvatili kao moćno sredstvo slikovnog izričaja. Autor istražuje utjecaj humornoga diskursa na učinkovitost odgojno-obrazovnoga procesa te mogućnosti primjene Alan Forda u osnovnoškolskoj i srednjoškolskoj nastavnoj praksi. U sklopu istraživanja ispitana je važnost humora kao jedne od poželjnih osobina nastavnika. Istraživanje je provedeno u 14 škola Primorsko-goranske županije, na uzorku od 354 učenika osmih razreda osnovnih i završnih razreda srednjih strukovnih škola i gimnazija. Iz analize distribucije rezultata može se zaključiti kako humor bitno utječe na učinkovitost poučavanja i na kvalitetu odnosa između nastavnika i učenika, dok metodika stripa u nastavi osigurava diskurs svakodnevnice.

Ključne riječi: Alan Ford, humor u nastavi, medijska kultura, samoironija, strip

*"Osmijeh traje možda samo jedan trenutak, ali u sjećanju može ostati cijeloga života. Zato ga darujmo i prihvatimo od drugih."
(Edward W. Reiler)*

Uvod

Smijeh je instinktivna aktivnost i kao specifična alternativa *ozbiljnoj* stvarnosti, u svojoj pojavnosti, zaseban oblik realnosti. Fenomen humora inherentan je svim sociokulturnim okruženjima unutar svih vremenskih razdoblja. Raznovrsni oblici humora potvrđuju njegovu divergentnost kao komunikacijske tehnike i kao nezaobilaznoga fenomena prilikom konceptualizacije ljudskih iskustava (Relja-Baturina, 2010). U odnosu na prethodna desetljeća suvremeni institucionalni odgoj i

obrazovanje ostvaruje se u promijenjenim komunikacijskim okolnostima i drugačijem društvenom okružju, što se odražava na senzibilitet mlađe generacije. U takvim uvjetima tradicionalni model poučavanja teško može udovoljiti izazovima današnjice, što se nameće kao aktualan društveno-pedagoški problem. Vodeći europski metodičari upućuju na potrebu usklađivanja nastavne prakse sa suvremenim zahtjevima. Obrazovanje stalno teži ispunjavanju temeljnih vrijednosti u čovjekovu životu, no često je frustrirajuće i bez radosti, inauguirajući u svom sivilu zabrane i pravila. Suodnos radosti i zdravlja bitan je čimbenik u razvoju mlade osobe, stoga humor može utjecati na ugodno ozračje u nastavi. Stječe se dojam kako poticajne didaktičke mogućnosti smijeha nisu u potpunosti iskorištene u hrvatskome školskom sustavu. Tradicionalno shvaćanje o neozbiljnosti igre i smijeha u "ozbiljnom" školskom ambijentu dovodi do situacije da se duhovitost kao imanentna ljudska osobina postupno zanemaruje i potiskuje u nastavnoj praksi. Postavlja se pitanje zbog čega je to tako i utječe li humor na učinkovitost poučavanja u razrednom odjeljenju.

Ovaj tekst propituje mogućnosti implementacije humora u školski prostor, ispitujući njegov utjecaj na ishode učenja i rezultate odgojno-obrazovnoga procesa te sugerira smjernice njegove primjene. U sklopu istraživanja ispitana je percepcija duhovitosti kao jedne od poželjnih osobina nastavnika. Humor je bitna odrednica mnogih stripova, medija koji u ekspanziji *interfejsa* polako gubi svoju nekadašnju moć. Ispitivanjem se htjelo utvrditi je li popularni medij još uvijek privlačan mladoj populaciji, po prirodi naklonjenoj vizualnoj percepciji, te postoje li razlike u recepciji između osmoškolaca i srednoškolaca. Kako se radi o iskorištavanju učeničkih prirodnih interesa, propituje se funkcionalna uporaba stripovnoga potencijala u poučavanju. U kvalitetnim primjercima dolazi do izražaja poetska funkcija hibridnoga diskursa, stoga je kao predložak za istraživanje poslužio strip *Alan Ford* u kojem specifičan humor i samoironija postaju moćno sredstvo slikovnoga izričaja. Istraživanje kreće od pretpostavke o humoru kao transkulturnoj pojavi koja je prisutna unutar različitih sociokulturnih okruženja. Usmjerena funkcionalnoj uporabi stripa studija je stoga doprinos razumijevanju humora u određenom prostornom okviru, među učeničkom populacijom njegovih konzumenata. Ujedno, ona je i prilog raspravi o djelotvornoj školi u kojoj su zadovoljni i učenici i učitelji.

Učinkovitost smijeha u obrazovanju i medij stripa

Analizirajući položaj smijeha u obrazovanju može se primijetiti koliko su u našoj kulturi razgraničeni učenje i igra. Dvije se krajnosti rijetko prožimaju, pogotovo u odgojno-obrazovnome procesu pa se učenicima šalje poruka kako se vedrina i humor ne uklapaju u školski prostor. U novom tisućljeću zbivaju se velike promjene koje mladima obilježavaju svakodnevnicu, stoga sposobnost suočavanja i prilagođavanja promjenama postaje jedna od najvažnijih životnih vještina našeg vremena. Promjene mogu biti itekako stresne, a humor je učinkovita kognitivna alternativa stresu (Peat, 2001). Osim što olakšava društvenu komunikaciju, smijeh kao instiktivna aktivnost

može oplemeniti i pedagoški sustav. Proučavanje bitnih značajki humora traži multidisciplinarni pristup, a u nas je uloga humora i smijeha pomalo zapostavljena u znanstvenim studijama. U opusu pedagoške literature nema previše zapaženih radova o fenomenu humora i ulozi smijeha u odgojno-obrazovnome procesu. Sustavnije se tom problematikom pozabavio Milan Matijević (1994). Analizirajući *sociologiju zabave*, ulogu i značenje humora u životu mladih, Relja i Baturina (2010) su ustanovili kako se za humorom najčešće poseže radi zabave, ali i radi prevladavanja svađa i sukoba.²⁰ Recentne studije pokazuju djelotvornost humora kao obrambenog mehanizma u situacijama ekstremnog stresa, a stres je središnja značajka obrazovanja u svijetu i prirodna reakcija na inteziviranje znanja u obrazovanju. Prema Korobkinu (1988) humor može smanjiti anksioznost i tjeskobno raspoloženje mijenjajući učenikov doživljaj obrazovnoga procesa. Primjereno iskorišten humor pomaže učitelju u razvijanju boljeg odnosa s učenicima. Pod uvjetom da nije neumjeren, može povećati pozornost i zanimanje pomažući u pojašnjenju sadržaja o kojem se govori.²¹ Spretna uporaba humora smatra se posebnom društvenom vještinom. U nedostatku relevantne literature o ulozi humoru u odgojnoj komunikaciji nastavnici su vedrinom i smijehom po vlastitoj intuiciji oplemenjivali svoje poučavanje. Duhovitost je prirodna značajka ličnosti i mnogi učitelji spontano koriste humor kao edukativni alat, ali što je s odgojiteljima koji nemaju naglašen smisao za humor – postoje li tehnike koje se mogu primijeniti u nastavi? Što se može učiniti kako bi se komunikacija između predavača i učenika humanizirala i obogatila humornim ozračjem? Jedna od mogućnosti je i primjena stripa, popularnoga medija koji unutar školskoga programa može osigurati diskurs svakodnevnice.

Strip je važan literarno-likovni medij čovjekova djetinjstva: specifični semiotički sustav koji ima nezamjenjivu ulogu u komunikaciji najmlađih općenito i u učenju jezika jer je gotovo univerzalan.²² Ekspanzijom *interfejsa* dolazi do krize tiskanoga

²⁰ Autori istraživanja apostrofiraju svijest mladih o terapeutskoj ulozi humora, kao i njegovu nezaobilaznu ulogu u školskom prostoru. Po mišljenju ispitanika humor uvelike utječe na podizanje kvalitete obrazovnoga procesa, stoga on nije tek puko sredstvo rasonode, već omogućuje poboljšanje inter-/intrageneracijskih odnosa.

²¹ Matijević i Miljević-Ridički (1994) ispitivali su u kojoj mjeri učitelji u osnovnim i stručnim školama pokazuju smisao za humor, tj. postoji li razlika između učitelja na različitim stupnjevima školovanja i razlike po spolu. Došli su do zanimljivih rezultata: studenti i gimnazijalci postižu bolje rezultate – pokazali su veći smisao za humor, učitelji stručnih predmeta pokazuju bolje rezultate u SUB testovima u odnosu na učitelje razredne i predmetne nastave, dok s obzirom na spol ispitanika nije zapažena statistički značajna razlika.

²² Ankete provedene među osnovnoškolskom populacijom krajem osamdesetih i devedesetih godina potvrđuju kako su učenici masovni konzumenti stripa. M. Kermek-Serdanović provela je 1986. god. istraživanje "Stariji osnovac i strip" sa željom da upozori na pojavu učeničkoga izvannastavnog čitanja i strukturu neobavezne lektire koja je često nepoznanica i za školu i za roditelje. Utvrđeno je kako je strip najčitanija neobavezna učenička lektira djece u dobi od jedanaest do četrnaest godina. Istraživanje koje je provela D. Lazić 1990. god. potvrdilo je kako učenici sedmih razreda u izvannastavnome čitanju daju prednost stripu pred školskom lektirou. Obje istraživačice ne dvoje o nužnosti uvrštavanja stripa u nastavni proces. Zanimljiva razmišljanja o primjeni popularnoga medija u nastavi ponudile su E. Millard i J. Marsh (*Department of Educational Studies, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK*). Njihov se rad temelji na istraživanju dječjih interesa prema stripu. U 1997. godini proučavale su reakcije učenika osnovne škole na posuđivanje stripova u školskoj knjižnici. Zaključile su kako čitanje stripa osigurava diskurs svakodnevnice što se može iskoristiti za motiviranje učenika u nastavi jezika. Među brojnim zapažanjima ponavlja se i misao kako stripovi čine djecu sretnom, stoga privlačni medij može postati netradicionalna potpora učenju.

medija, čega nije pošteđen ni strip.²³ Budući da strip koristi tekst, dizajn i različite stilističke elemente u kreiranju značenja, on je medij pogodan za visoku umjetnost, a čitatelj je uvijek suoblikovatelj jer sudjeluje u dekodiranju poruke. Uz negativne konotacije o eskapističkom karakteru medija²⁴ koji mladoj osobi omogućuje negativnu identifikaciju, ne može se zanemariti činjenica da je čitanje stripa složen semiotički proces. Riječ je o značenjskome sustavu koji uz verbalni jezik sadrži i vizualnu komponentu, ostvarenu ikoničkim znakovima.²⁵ Sasvim je prirodno da kultura teksta napada vizualno, što susrećemo i u negativnom stavu prema slikama u knjigama općenito, a što je posebno iritantno kada se previđa pedagoška važnost vizualnoga pamćenja. Novonastalo područje edukativnog interesa rezultiralo je kreiranjem novih školskih kurikula koji uključuju korištenje stripova u nastavi.²⁶

Budući da je duhovitost bitno obilježje inteligentne osobe, samoironija se smatra vrhuncem smisla za humor.²⁷ Upravo je samoironija zaštitni znak stripa *Alan Ford* koji objedinjuje realističke elemente sa socijalnom satirou i crnim humorom. Groteskan prikaz korumpiranoga društva kroz galeriju nezaboravnih likova aktualan je i u

²³ O položaju knjige u doba postmoderne piše lingvist Gunther Kress u svojoj knjizi *Literacy in the New Media Age*. On raspravlja o pismenosti koja uključuje čitanje sa svim mogućim semiotički opterećenim značenjima te promišlja o dalekosežnim sociološkim i kulturološkim posljedicama medijskih mijena. Govoreći o medijima novoga doba Kress primjenjuje postmodernističko shvaćanje u polju obrazovanja, mišljenje kako jezični razvoj mora obuhvatiti učenje dvaju različitih oblika komunikacije. Riječ je o poticajnom razmišljanju da čitatelj, govornik ili gledatelj mogu mijenjati sadržaj značenja u skladu s promjenjivim kontekstom u kojem se znak susreće jer društvene konvencije ne mogu nikada odrediti značenje u apsolutnom smislu. Kako se dvije logike spajaju, slika i tekst zajednički djeluju u prenošenju značenja.

²⁴ Medij stripa je kroz povijest različito tretiran, često s negativnim estetskim konotacijama. Art Spiegelmanov *Miš* 1992. godine postaje prvi stripovni svezak nagrađen Pulitzerovom nagradom, nakon čega u javnosti počinje prevladavati mišljenje da je strip kao forma dugotrajnim razvojem konačno dosegnuo umjetničku zrelost. Početkom 21. stoljeća strip ulazi u osnovnoškolske, srednjoškolske i visokoškolske programe kao pomoćno sredstvo u svladavanju društvenih i prirodnih znanosti.

²⁵ Semiotičari upućuju na složen sustav konotacijskih jedinica u stripu. Svojim verbalnim i likovnim sredstvima on može konotirati različite estetske i ideološke vrijednosti. Analizirajući *Supermena* Umberto Eco dokazuje kako strip djeluje upravo na ideološkoj razini: plošno okarakterizirani lik superheroja poziva na opuštanje i zabavu, za razliku od niza stripova zasnovanih na načelu začudnosti (*Asterix*, *Strumpfovi* itd.). Osim što je konvencionalni znak, oblačić u stripu je i element metajezika, a čitatelji s lakoćom prihvaćaju metajezičnu (stilsku) funkciju stripovnoga diskursa.

²⁶ Ubrzano pokretanje studijskih programa posvećenih mediju stripa na sveučilištima diljem svijeta tjera nakladnike na izdavanje primjerenih časopisa koji prate aktualna zbivanja dinamikom koju mediji zahtijevaju. Engleski časopis *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* prepoznaje prirodenu interdisciplinarnu prirodu stripa obuhvaćajući sve aspekte stripova i crtanih romana, s naglaskom na njihovom kulturnom i kreativnom značenju. Američki mrežničasopis *The Graphic Classroom* promiče uporabu visokokvalitetnih stripova u poučavanju, i to u obrazovnoj vertikali od osnovne škole do fakulteta. Osim što promiče kvalitetna izdanja, odgojiteljima nudi smjernice za istraživanje popularnog medija u vidu stručne literature i udžbenika o stripu.

²⁷ Po Matijeвиću (1994) samo inteligentne i dovoljno aktualizirane osobe imaju sposobnost autoironije i pričanja viceva "na svoj račun" pa bi bilo poželjno da te crte ličnosti karakteriziraju sve učitelje. Matijeвиć je prikupio spoznaje svojih studenata, budućih učitelja, o ulozi humora u nastavnome procesu. Studenti su (260 ispitanika) trebali procijeniti u kojoj je mjeri humor bio nazočan u ukupnoj nastavnoj situaciji tijekom dvanaestogodišnjega školovanja, te koliko je on važan za ukupne odgojno-obrazovne rezultate u školi. Studenti su ustvrdili kako su bili rijetki nastavnici koji su pridavali veće značenje duhovitim nastavnim situacijama. Gotovo 40 % ispitanika smatra kako je humora u njihovom školovanju bilo malo ili veoma malo, a ako je i bilo, to su inicirali sami učenici ili učitelji svojim smiješnim izgledom ili izjavama. Odgovori većine ispitanika navode na zaključak kako su rijetki nastavnici koji koriste humor za stvaranje ugodnoga ozračja u nastavi te za poticanje učeničke kreativnosti.

današnje vrijeme.²⁸ Svijet *Alana Forda* polariziran je, a njegova je poetika, poput crteža, crno-bijela. Naglašena socijalna suprotnost predstavljena je ekstremnim siromaštvom (gdje pripadaju i glavni likovi) i svijetom bogataša i raskoši. Za razliku od običnog humora (koji je sam sebi svrhom), duhovitost stripa na tragu je primijenjenoga humora, oblika stvorenog za skrivene namjere ironične provenijencije (Hanckok, 2004). Svrha je primijenjenoga humora itekako ozbiljna: budući da prožima okruženje društvene interakcije, alanfordovski se humor može sagledati kao konstitutivni element društvene stvarnosti. U razdoblju žestokih društvenih promjena autori stripa su bez zadržke kritizirali klasne i socijalne razlike, ideološke ekstreme i politički nemoral. Diskurs stripa podastire misao o ispraznom materijalizmu s porukom kako za sreću nije potrebno bogatstvo, već se i u kriznim vremenima može lijepo živjeti. Kako je u fokusu njihove kritičke oštrice prije svega pojedinac, *Alan Ford* se može smatrati svojevrsnim manifestom mizantropije.²⁹ Unatoč brojnim povijesnim i političkim promjenama posljednjih godina *Alan Ford* ne gubi na popularnosti, što potvrđuje kako grupa TNT nije samo produkt talijanskoga imaginarija, već mnogo više od toga.³⁰

Budući da su djeca po prirodi vizualna, humor i empatija stripa *Alan Ford* mogli bi biti pogodan metodološki instrumentarij za usvajanje novih obrazovnih sadržaja. U tom kontekstu uporabu popularnoga medija u razredu valja promatrati kao iskorištavanje učeničkih prirodnih interesa.

Metodologija istraživanja

Unutar empirijskoga istraživanja pozornost je usmjerena uloziti i značenju humora u nastavnom procesu. Taj je cilj razrađen i putem posebnoga cilja koji se odnosi

²⁸ Bogata produkcija stripova proživljavala je u Hrvatskoj sedamdesetih i osamdesetih godina svoje zlatno doba. Strip *Alan Ford*, autorskoga dvojca – crtača Magnusa (Roberto Raviola) i scenarista Bunkera (Lucciano Secchi), nastaje u specifičnom društvenom kontekstu, u razdoblju liberalizma i opće pobune protiv imperijalnih tendencija Zapada i totalitarizma Istoka. Iako je svojom visokom tiražom postao dio pop-kulture, za razliku od ostalih Bonellijevih izdanja *Alan Ford* je svojom širokom recepcijom izborio status kolekcionarskoga stripa. Sarkastičan način sagledavanja životne svakodnevice i crni humor postali su zaštitni znak klasičnoga stripa. Unatoč slabim početnim rezultatima izdavač *Editoriale Corno* nije odustao od izdavanja serije što se dvije godine kasnije pokazalo ispravnim potezom: tiraža raste na 100 000 primjeraka. Strip prepoznatljivoga vizualnog identiteta popularnost duguje osebujnom Raviolinom crtačkom stilu te neobičnom džepnom formatu (22 x 14 cm) s dva kadra na jednoj stranici. Zamišljen kao parodija popularnoga špijuskog žanra i Jamesa Bonda strip inauguriira junake "tajne organizacije" kodnog naziva *Grupa TNT*, koji su potpuna suprotnost Agentu 007. Za razliku od šarmantnoga tajnog agenta koji s lakoćom rješava najteže slučajeve, članovi grupe su siromašni skup dilentanata koji i pored nevjerovatne nespretnosti uspijeva razriješiti komplicirane slučajeve. Strip plijeni svojim svjetonazorom i crnim humorom: radnja se temelji na tenziji među dvama svijetovima – kada bogati i siromašni dođu u kontakt, zbivaju se urnebesne situacije. (www.ubcfumetti.com)

²⁹ Popularnosti stripa u nas nesumnjivo je pridonio sjajan prijevod hrvatskog publicista i književnika Nenada Brixyja koji je oduševljavao čitatelje sočnim kolokvijalnim idiomom. Kako se sadržaj stripa temeljio na igri riječi, Brixy se snalazio na razne načine: koristio je arhaizme (npr. *Tko to tako neuviđavno bući?*), žargonizme (npr. natpis na limenci *Malo kola, više smola.*), iskoristivši slobodu prevođenja a da pritom ne naruši autentičnost originala (zapis na Grunfovoj majici *Čim vidiš duha, napij se PIK piva do uha*). I sam scenarist Secchi mu je jednom prilikom odao priznanje za zasluge koje je imao na popularizaciji *Alana Forda* u bivšoj Jugoslaviji.

³⁰ Pitanje koje se nameće glasi: Čemu strip duguje popularnost? Osim specifičnoga šarma strip je i danas aktualan jer neki njegovi aspekti mogu utjecati na recipijente više nego prije. Hrvatska se sedamdesetih suočila s prvim naznakama privatnoga vlasništva, disproporcijama u gospodarstvu i rastućim brojem nezaposlenih, stoga je strip u svom najslavnijem razdoblju na prosječno frustriranog čitatelja djelovao utješno. Trideset godina kasnije bipolarizacija u društvu i dalje je prisutna. Čitatelji (posebice u urbanoj sredini) lako se mogu poistovjetiti s junacima grupe TNT.

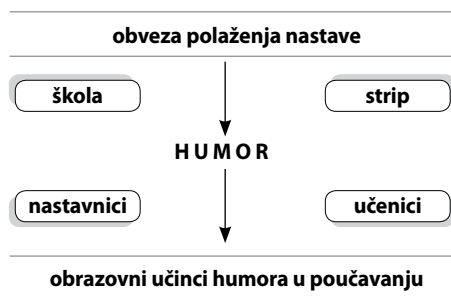
na funkcionalnu uporabu stripovnoga medija. Nastojalo se ispitati postoje li razlike u recepciji stripa *Alan Ford* između različitih dobnih skupine, učenika osnovnih i srednjih škola, kao i odstupanja u odnosu na spol ispitanika. U sklopu istraživanja ispitana je važnost humora kao jedne od poželjnih osobina nastavnika.

U skladu s pretpostavkom da je humor transkulturna pojava koja je prisutna unutar različitih sociokulturnih okruženja, postavljene su sljedeće hipoteze:

- H1 – učenici će pokazati naklonost prema humoru u razrednom odjeljenju
- H2 – kako su mladima bliska djela koja korespondiraju s njihovim doživljajnim iskustvom, ispitanici će pokazati naklonost prema popularnome mediju stripa
- H3 – učenici će pozitivno vrednovati duhovitost nastavnika kao imanentnu ljudsku osobinu

Uloga humora u poučavanju i recepcija stripa među školskom populacijom ispitani su Pearsonovim hi-kvadrat testom i Fisherovim egzaktnim testom, kvantitativnim metodološkim pristupom. U istraživanju je primijenjena metoda anketiranja na slučajno odabranom uzorku učenika, utemeljena na samoiskazu ispitanika o osobnome mišljenju i stavu.

Hipotetski model interakcije među ispitivanim varijablama mogao bi se grafički predočiti na sljedeći način:



Grafički prilog 1.

Uzorak

Ispitivanjem je ukupno obuhvaćeno 14 škola Primorsko-goranske županije, od čega 7 osnovnih škola (OŠ *Turnić*, OŠ *Vežica*, OŠ *Vladimira Gortana*, OŠ *Ivana Zajca*, OŠ *Kostrena*, OŠ *Gornja Vežica* i OŠ *Eugena Kumičića*) i 7 srednjih stručnih škola i gimnazija (*Ekonomska škola Mije Mirkovića*, *Salezijanska klasična gimnazija*, *Strojarska škola za industrijska i obrtnička zanimanja*, *Elektroindustrijska i obrtnička škola*, *Gimnazija Andrije Mohorovičića*, *Prva riječka hrvatska gimnazija* i *Medicinska škola u Rijeci*). Ispitanici su bili podijeljeni u dva poduzorka – na učenike osmih razreda i na maturante, tj. učenike završnih razreda srednje škole. Poduzorcima su zastupljeni u proporcionalnome broju, dok su ispitanici otprilike ravnomjerno zastupljeni prema spolu: 182 osmoškolca (83 učenice i 99 učenika) te 172 srednjoškolca (81 djevojka i 91

mladić). Kako su u gimnazijama podjednako zastupljene obje skupine, u istraživanje su zbog veće objektivnosti uključene strukovne škole s pretežito muškom (*Strojarska škola za industrijska i obrtnička zanimanja, Elektroindustrijska i obrtnička škola*) ili ženskom učeničkom populacijom (*Ekonomska škola Mije Mirkovića, Medicinska škola*). Ukupan broj obuhvaćen ispitivanjem iznosio je 354 ispitanika. Svi učenici žive u sličnim socioekonomskim uvjetima i pohađaju školu u gradskoj sredini.

Osim autora u istraživanju je sudjelovalo ukupno 20 nastavnika anketara. Kvalitativni je pristup kao temeljna metoda u prikupljanju podataka sadržavao prethodno čitanja epizode *Alana Forda* pod naslovom "Broj 1". U prvoj skupini kvalitativnih podataka registrirani su utisci o stripu. Kako je riječ o pretežno empirijskim podacima koji su skupljani neposredno nakon iščitavanja stripa, u ispitivanju se nastojalo saznati učeničke dojmove o epizodi *Alana Forda* te subjektivna značenja koja ispitanici pridaju percipiranom sadržaju. Tako se udovoljavalo jednom od posebnih ciljeva istraživanja koji je integrirao više procese razumijevanja i značenja koja učenici pridaju popularnom tiskanom mediju. Oblikovani instrument sadržavao je kombinaciju pitanja otvorenoga i zatvorenoga tipa, a upitnik je sadržavao 12 pitanja. Dva pitanja sastojala su se od tvrdnji na koje je ispitanik mogao odgovoriti potvrdno (da) ili niječno (ne). U drugoj skupini kvalitativnih podataka registrirani su iskustveni stavovi o nastavnom osoblju i uporabi humora. Anketni se listić ispunjavao tijekom nastave u navedenim školama, a anketa je bila anonimna. Ispitivanje je realizirano tijekom nastave na satovima Hrvatskoga jezika, dok je terenska faza istraživanja izvršena u razdoblju od svibnja 2011. do ožujka 2012. godine, na prostornome okviru grada Rijeke.

Analiza istraživanja

Stavovi osmoškolaca i srednjoškolaca o recepciji stripa i mogućnosti njegove primjene u nastavi nisu ujednačeni. Za određivanje razlika između osmaša i maturanata primijenjen je Fisherov egzaktni test ($p=0.003$), prikazan Tablicom 1. Na prvo pitanje *Voliš li čitati stripove?*, 253 učenika odgovorilo je potvrdno, što čini 72% uzorka istraživanja, a 101 učenik zaokružio je niječni odgovor. Opće razlike u ispitivanim varijablama: ovisno o spolu učenici značajno prednjače u sklonosti čitanja stripa (posebice u osnovnim školama) pred učenicama koje su u manjem broju poklonice popularnoga medija ($190/225 = 85\%$ od svih muških ispitanika u uzorku, u odnosu na $146/229 = 64\%$ od ženskih ispitanika). Zamjetna je razlika u recepciji stripa između osmoškolaca i srednjoškolaca – učenici osmih razreda veći su pobornici čitanja stripa u odnosu na učenike završnih razreda srednje škole. Međutim, unutar skupine maturanata nije zapažena statistički značajnija razlika između učenika strukovnih škola i gimnazija.

Tablica 1.

Iako nisu utvrđene značajne razlike u prosječnim vrijednostima, ipak je utvrđena bitna razlika u objasnidbenim odgovorima iz upitnika. Ispitanici nisu jedinstveni

u navođenju razloga zašto *vole/ne vole* čitati strip. Pobornici stripa naglašavaju zanimljivost i duhovitost stripovnoga diskursa, spoj slike i teksta, kratkoću i nezahtjevnost teksta, opuštajući i zabavni karakter medija itd. Suprotno, prevladavaju stavovi o nezanimljivosti medija koji više nije u modi, kao i opservacije o nedostatku navike čitanja stripova. Kod učenica se javlja tvrdnja kako radije čitaju knjige, dok je želja za zabavom i akcijom odrednica koja se najčešće pojavljuje u odgovorima muških ispitanika.

Na drugo pitanje *Kako ti se sviđjela epizoda "Broj 1"?*, ispitanici su mogli odabrati odgovore: a) *jako mi se sviđjela*, b) *nije loša* i c) *uopće mi se nije sviđjela*. Rezultati su prikazani u Tablici 2. Dječaci u značajno većem udjelu izražavaju oduševljenje stripom (Pearsonov hi-kvadrat test, $df=2$, $c^2= 6.73$, $p=0.034$) dok su djevojčice suzdržanije. Sličan je rezultat kod usporedbe odgovora prema dobi obrazovanja – osnovnoškolci su u značajno većem postotku oduševljeni stripom (Pearsonov hi-kvadrat test $df=2$, $c^2= 23.48$, $p<0.001$).

Tablica 2.

Posebno su zanimljive refleksije mladih o izričaju stripa: u objašnjenju svoga izbora izdvojit ćemo najčešća zapažanja ispitanih učenika: *smiješna je i zanimljiva sa odličnim crtežima; jer je duhovita i zabavna; puno je akcije i avantura; Zabavne su mi anegdote te napetost tijekom stripa; zanimljivi su likovi; jer je strip poučan; inteligentan humor; predivan crtež i životnost likova (osnovne škole), zanimljiva je priča popraćena slikom; na komičan način prikazuje životne situacije; zanimljiv je, crteži su odlični; smiješna je i lako se čita; svidio mi se karikiran prikaz realnosti; volim Alan Forda općenito; smiješna je i poučna (srednje škole)*. Manji je broj ispitanika zaokružio varijantu c) *uopće mi se nije svidio*, stoga su izostala opsežnija pojašnjenja. Izdvojit ćemo tek dva zapažanja: *nisam baš razumjela* (OŠ Ivana Zajca), *predjetinjasto je* (Ekonomska škola Mije Mirkovića).

I sljedeća dva pitanja bila su usmjerena provjeri učeničkih čitateljskih dojmova. Kod odgovora na pitanje što im se u *Alanu Fordu* sviđjelo; a) *crtež*, b) *priča* ili c) *i jedno i drugo* - crtež preferira 127 ispitanika, priču 31 ispitanik, a čak 196 ispitanika (55%) obje komponente stripa. Po dobnim skupinama zamjetna je sklonost srednjoškolaca ilustraciji dok se osmoškolcima u jednakoj mjeri dopadaju i crtež i priča (33%). Odgovori se razlikuju prema spolu – djevojčice značajno više vole crtež nego dječaci, a dječaci se češće odlučuju za opciju " i crteža i priče" (Pearsonov c^2 test, $c^2=15,13$, $df=2$ $p<0,001$). S obzirom na razinu obrazovanja, ne pokazuje se značajna razlika u odgovorima (Pearsonov c^2 test, $c^2=5,22$, $df=2$ $p=0,073$).

U trojnom izboru mogućnosti *Strip me: a) nasmijao, b) rastužio* ili c) *iživcirao*, većina ispitanika iskazala je stav kako ih je strip *nasmijao* (301 odgovor ili 85%), odgovor *b*) zaokružilo je 12 ispitanika, a odgovor c) *iživcirao* 41 ispitanik (12%). Prema spolu, veći udio dječaka nego djevojčica (90% prema 79%) strip je nasmijao, a veći udio djevojčica *iživcirao* – 16% djevojčica u odnosu na 8% dječaka (Pearsonov c^2 test, $c^2=8,00$, $df=2$ $p=0,018$). Prema dobi nema značajnih razlika u odgovorima. U obrazloženju su

učenici naveli razloge svojeg izbora. Oni koje je strip nasmejao navodili su kako *strip ima dijelove koji su humoristični, a i slike su uvjerljive; pokazuje neke stvari i situacije koje bi bile vrlo ozbiljne u stvarnom životu na veoma smiješan način; ima dobrih fora; zbog smiješnih likova i njihova ponašanja; dobro je nacrtano; jer su likovi zabavni i smiješni; smiješni dijalozi i neobične situacije; jer je prožet humorom a crtež je fantastičan* (osnovne škole), *zbog smiješnih dijaloga; zbog satiričnog pogleda na svijet; jer ima puno ironije i sarkazma; jer je duhovit i kritizira društvo; crtež i dijalog u kombinaciji; zbog super radnje i originalnih likova; ismijava životne situacije; zato jer su likovi smiješni i pomalo zbunjeni; slike su originalne kao i sam sadržaj stripa* (srednje škole). Zanimljiva su obrazloženja ispitanika koje je strip "iživcirao": *ne volim čitati ne realne tekstove* (Ekonomska škola); *ne volim Alan Forda; ne volim čitati stripove; jako je čudan* (Gornja Vežica). Gimnazijalka koju je strip rastužio obrazložila je tvrdnju – *žalosno je u kakvom svijetu živimo*.

Na pitanje *Koja je namjera (cilj) autora stripa, Magnusa i Bunkera?*, učenici su se među ponuđenim odgovorima u najvećem broju odlučili za opciju c) *kritiziranje društvenih slabosti*, u 160 slučajeva (47%), odgovor a) *da zabavi čitatelje* u 127 slučajeva (36%), za odgovor b) *da pouči čitatelje* u 67 slučajeva (19%). U raspodjela prema spolu nema značajnih razlika (Pearsonov χ^2 test, $\chi^2=3,89$, $df=2$ $p=0,143$) kao ni prema dobi (nema razlika, Pearsonov χ^2 test, $\chi^2=2,29$, $df=2$ $p=0,328$).

Sedmo je pitanje bilo usmjereno aktualizaciji popularnoga medija: *Može li nam strip Alan Ford pomoći da bolje shvatimo svijet u kojem živimo?* Potvrдно je odgovorilo čak 286 ispitanika ili 81%. Prema spolu, potvrдно odgovara nešto veći udio djevojčica (136 ili 83% djevojčica prema 150 ili 79% dječaka, što nije statistički značajna razlika, $p=0,343$). S obzirom na dob, potvrдно odgovara nešto veći udio srednjoškolaca (142 ili 83% prema 144 ili 79% učenika osnovnih škola, što također nije značajno, $p=0,411$). Ispitanici nisu jedinstveni u navođenju razloga zašto smatraju da se strip *može/ne može koristiti* u nastavi. Iako nisu utvrđene značajne razlike u prosječnim vrijednostima, ipak je utvrđena bitna razlika u objasnidbenim odgovorima iz upitnika. Popis tih odrednica je širok pa navodimo samo one koje se učestalije javljaju u obje dobne skupine:

Odgovor DA: *jer prikazuju stvarnu sliku života* (N=67); *kroz ironiju prikazuje društvo u kojem živimo* (N=29), *jer ima poruku i poučan je* (N=25), *on ukazuje na velike nepravde, pohlepu i nejednakost u današnjem društvu* (N=21), *zato što tako možemo lakše shvatiti neku lekciju koju učimo* (N=12) itd.

Obrazloženja uz odgovor NE su rjeđa pa ih navodimo u cijelosti: *u stripu je sve nerearno; to je samo strip s izmišljenim likovima; strip nema dublje značenje; mišljenje o svijetu moramo sami stvoriti i neće nam pomoći strip* (osnovne škole), *jer je to kao bajka za djecu; zato što je strip napisan da zabavi čitatelje; ne, jednostavno je samo smiješan; ne otkriva nam ništa novo;* (srednje škole).

U sljedećem se pitanju tragalo za učeničkim stavom o funkcionalnosti stripa u edukaciji. Učenicima su ponuđena dvojna rješenja: a) *stripu nije mjesto u školi* i b) *strip se može iskoristiti u nastavi*. Većina ispitanika, 308 učenika ili visokih 87%, mišljenja

je kako se strip može iskoristiti u nastavnom procesu, dok samo 46 (13%) smatra da stripu nije mjesto u školi. Mišljenja se ne razlikuju prema spolu (Pearsonov c^2 test, $c^2=1,86$, $df=2$ $p=0,172$), ali se razlikuju prema dobi (Pearsonov c^2 test, $c^2=4,42$, $df=2$ $p=0,035$). Učenici srednjih škola u značajno manjem postotku misle da se strip može iskoristiti u nastavnom procesu. Podaci su prikazani Tablicom 3.

Tablica 3.

Učenici su mogli i obrazložiti svoj stav.³¹ Posebno su bile zanimljive opservacije ispitanika koji se protive primjeni stripa u školskom prostoru, npr. *ovo je ozbiljna ustanova a ne vrtić* (Medicinska škola), *jer na državnoj maturi to ne pitaju* (Salezijanska klasična gimnazija).

Usljedilo je 9. pitanje: *Napiši na koji se način Alan Ford ili neki drugi strip može iskoristiti u nastavnome procesu*. Osim očekivanih odgovora o zabavnom karakteru stripa i o prekidanju monotonije u školskom prostoru, popis je poširok pa navodimo odrednice koje se učestalije javljaju u obje dobne skupine: *jer mogu biti poučni, a također i zabavni učenicima* (N=60), *zato jer je strip fora i zabavno ga je čitati* (N= 42), *učenje kroz šalu* (N=32), *osvježio bi nastavu i utjecao pozitivno na učenike* (N=16), *strip može poslužiti za raspravljanje o aktualnim temama i problemima* (N=12), *može olakšati razumijevanje gradiva jer se pomoću stripa lakše uči* (N= 10) itd. Srednjoškolci upozoravaju na vlastite interese (*Nastava nas mora podučiti svakodnevnom životu baš kao i strip*, Gimnazija Andrije Mohorovičića) i porabu stripa u svrhu razonode na satu. Mnogi ispitanici smatraju kako je popularni medij zanimljiviji od lektire pa može zamijeniti obvezne naslove iz književnosti. Najčešće se javljaju sljedeća razmišljanja: *mnoge stvari i dijalози iz stripa mogu biti jako poučni, a zanimljiviji su od pisanog teksta*, stoga verbalno-likovni iskaz *može poslužiti kao lektira, za prepričavanje, poput lektire* itd.

Sljedeće je pitanje u izravnoj vezi s prethodnim: *U kojem nastavnom području i dijelu sata bi nastavnik/ica mogao/la uporabiti strip?* Raspon odgovora i obrazovnih područja koja su učenici navodili bio je veoma širok: gotovo su spomenuti svi nastavni predmeti, od Hrvatskoga jezika do Vjeronauka i Sata razredne zajednice. Pojedina su obrazovna područja zastupljenija u učeničkim odgovorima – u sonovnoj školi Likovna kultura i Povijest, a u srednjoj školi Medijska kultura i Povijest. No, očekivano najzastupljenije je područje materinskoga jezika: čak 76 osmoškolaca i 56 srednjoškolaca (ukupno 37 % ispitanika) uporabilo bi strip na satovima Hrvatskoga jezika i književnosti. Nakon Hrvatskoga jezika (N=132) po broju glasova slijede Medijska kultura (N=27) i Povijest (N=15). Učenici su posebno isticali bliskost jezično-umjetničkog područja: *strip se može iskoristiti u književnosti – s ciljem da se opusti učenike od teške literature; tako što učitelj interpretira strip učenicima; možemo ih obrađivati kao bilo koji tekst iz čitanke; može se čitati i komentirati pročitano; zabava za učenike i rasprava kao lektira; može*

³¹ Navodimo zanimljivije učeničke opservacije: *jer bi u isto vrijeme učili i zabavljali se, što bi bilo odlično; postoje razni žanrovi – može se jako mnogo naučiti i lakše zapamtiti; jer bi strip osvježio nastavu; jer je poučan i nije težak; kad se profesorica želi pokazati* (osnovne škole). I srednjoškolci su imali interesantnih zapažanja: *jer može olakšati shvaćanje gradiva; zabavnije učenje o ozbiljnim i kompliciranijim temama; za razonodu na satu* itd.

se usporediti s nekim primjerima iz književnosti; povući paralelu s realizmom (kritika društva, usporedba dobrog i lošeg); prikazali neki proces na zanimljiv način, ovaj strip bi mogli analizirati na satu hrvatskog i izvući pouku iz njega itd. Kada je riječ o nastavnim etapama, učenici su navodili brojne mogućnosti, od uvodnoga dijela sata (na početku sata kako bi se motiviralo učenike; jer nas može motivirati na zanimljiv način; može pomoći da se učenik zainteresira za neku temu), središnjega dijela (u književnosti – cijeli sat), do završnoga dijela sata (za opuštanje na kraju sata).

U drugoj skupini kvalitativnih podataka registrirani su iskustveni stavovi ispitanika o nastavnicima i njihovoj porabi humora. Na pitanje *Voliš li duhovite nastavnike i zašto?* osim četvero ispitanika **svi** ostali učenici odgovorili su potvrdno! Odnos mladih prema doživljaju duhovitih nastavnika detaljnije je analiziran pa su razvrstane ocjenjene tvrdnje ispitanika prema najzastupljenijim zapažanjima sa ciljem svrstavanja pojedinih skupina koje se homogeniziraju s obzirom na stupanj prihvaćanja pojedinih stavova:

Najzastupljenije tvrdnje učenika osmih razreda: *uz duhovite nastavnike bolje naučim i slušam* (N =21), *da, jer onda satovi nisu dosadni* (N =18), *volim jer se opustim pa lakše svladam gradivo* (N =18), *nastava je zanimljiva pa mi brže prođe vrijeme* (N=12), *jer učine nastavu zabavnom* (N =10), *da jer je lakše s njima komunicirati* (N =10), *smanjuju napetost na satu* (N =8) itd.

Najzastupljenije tvrdnje srednjoškolaca: *volim jer su onda i učenici opušteni/na nastavi je bolja atmosfera i učenici se dobro osjećaju* (N =18), *jer su opušteniji i bolja je komunikacija s takvim profesorima* (N= 15), *na nastavi je bolja atmosfera i učenici se dobro osjećaju* (N=14), *da, zabavniji su i pristupačniji od drugih* (N=10), *volim jer na zabavan način prezentiraju gradivo i lakše ga pamtimo* (N=8), *da jer dosadno gradivo učine zanimljivim* (N= 8), *žele uspostaviti ugodnu atmosferu i približiti se učeniku* (N=7), *volim jer ih nema puno a čine nastavu zanimljivijom* (N= 6), *jer humor može privući moju pažnju na neke ozbiljne stvari* (N=5) itd.

Neke su korelacije statistički značajnije, što svedoči o međusobnoj povezanosti analiziranih skupina problema vezanih uz monotonost/ozbiljnost predavačkih koncepcija. Najznačajnija statistička veza između ispitanika u osnovnim i srednjim školama vidljiva je među faktorima koji predstavljaju mišljenje o učinkovitosti duhovitih nastavnika, iz čega proizlazi zaključak kako način rada duhovitih nastavnika u visokom postotku učenicima osobito odgovara. U toj procjeni gotovo i nema razlike između učenika osmih razreda i maturanata niti razlike po spolu ispitanika. Tek su dva zapažanja s negativnim predznakom spram duhovitih nastavnika: *Baš i ne jer ne bi ništa naučili* (OŠ "E.Kumičić"), *Ne, živciraju me* (Prva riječka hrvatska gimnazija).

U zadnjem su pitanju učenici trebali iznijeti vlastiti stav o duhovitim nastavnicima: *Smatraš li da su nastavnici koji se šale na satu neozbiljni pa od njih ne možeš puno naučiti?* I ovdje su obje dobne skupine u visokom postotku odgovorile niječno. Tek su se dva učenika složila s ponuđenom tezom (Strojarska škola za obrtnička zanimanja), kako je riječ o neučinkovitim nastavnicima. Navest ćemo afirmativna zapažanja učenika osmih razreda: *ne, ako su strogi, dosadni i ozbiljni nitko ih ne sluša; ne, tako bolje učim jer nisam pod pritiskom; Ne, to je samo način na koji se učitelji pokušavaju približiti*

nama učenicima; ne, smatram da su takvi učitelji najbolji zbog toga što žele svoje učenike prvo nasmijati, a tek onda krenuti sa svojim satom; ne, jer samo žele razveseliti učenike... I srednjoškolci pozitivno ocjenjuju duhovite predavače: Ne, nego onda ga još više slušam; Ne, dapače, time razbijaju monotoniju koje je ionako previše, a i učenicima je zabavnije i opušteniji su; ponekad se treba i našaliti; Dapače, od njih možemo više naučiti; Ne, smatram da nastavnici moraju biti malo neozbiljni, lakše se uči; Volim ih zato jer su smiješni i sat mi brže prođe! Ne, kroz humor se može mnogo naučiti; ne, nego su samo opušteni i bolje rade svoj posao; Neeel; ne, naprotiv, zanimljivi su pa ih slušamo radije; apsolutno ne; ne, samo pokušavaju stvoriti bolju atmosferu da učenici budu aktivniji na satu; Baš suprotno – djeca na takav način lakše prate gradivo i usvajaju ga; Uz pomoć šala lakše pamtimo; Jer humor uvijek dobro dođe itd.

Za razliku od ujednačenih stavova ispitanih osmaša i maturanata, rijetki odgovori ispitanika koji smatraju da od duhovitih nastavnika ne mogu puno naučiti mahom upućuju na kritičko izrugivanje i ismijavanje učenika od strane odgojitelja: *ovisi u kojoj se granici šale s učenicima, bitno je ne pretjerati i steći autoritet (osnovna škola); Ne ako se šale neko kratko vrijeme, ako se šale cijeli sat onda se od njih ne može puno naučiti; da, ako se ne šale u granicama pristojnosti;” ako cijeli sat prođe u šali, da, mislim da su neozbiljni; Da ako nemaju granice (srednja škola).* Dobiveni odgovori ukazuju na činjenicu da humor može imati i negativne posljedice, ukoliko se koristi u kontekstu izrugivanja i podsmijeha.

Rasprava

U izlaznim rezultatima ankete ispitanici su iskazali priličan interes za čitanje stripa pa možemo zaključiti kako su rezultati istraživanja dobrim dijelom potvrdili očekivanja i postavljane hipoteze. U recepciji stripa razvidne su razlike prema dobi i prema spolu ispitanika. Učenici osmih razreda veći su pobornici čitanja stripa od srednjoškolaca što se može protumačiti dobnim interesima – u pubertetu učenici iskazuju pojačani interes prema mediju stripa, dok se u zrelijoj adolescentskoj dobi on smanjuje. Mnogi odgovori upućuju na pozitivan prijam stripovnoga predloška među gimnazijalcima i učenicima četverogodišnjih "muških" strukovnih škola (*Elektroindustrijska i obrtnička škola*), što se ne može reći za učenike *Ekonomске škole Mije Mirkovića, Medicinske škole u Rijeci te trogodišnje Strojarske škole za industrijska i obrtnička zanimanja*, čiji je omjer pozitivnih i negativnih stavova gotovo proporcionalan. Osim što novi mediji svakako utječu na pad popularnosti stripa, moguće razloge valja tražiti u smanjenom interesu za strip među pretežito ženskom srednjoškolskom populacijom, kao i nespremnost za percipiranje ironičnoga humora koji zahtijeva aktivnoga čitatelja i određeni intelektualni napor. Očekivan je i podatak da su učenici veći poklonici stripa od učenica, posebice u osnovnim školama. U istraživanju je utvrđeno kako je među glavnim motivima *želja za zabavom i akcijom* naglašenija među muškom populacijom, dok ispitanice uz osjećaj ugone pri čitanju stripa preferiraju vizualnu dopadljivost i mogućnost relaksacije.

Posebno su zanimljive refleksije mladih o izričaju stripa: većini ispitanika se sviđjela epizoda "Broj 1" (u čemu prednjače osmoškolci s visokim postotkom odgovora *jako mi se sviđjela*), što potvrđuje pozitivan stav učenika prema crnohumornome romanu. Na pitanje što im se u stripu sviđjelo te kakvo je raspoloženje u njima pobudio, ispitanici nisu u jednakoj mjeri izdvajali sve elemente stripa. Po dobnim skupinama zamjetna je sklonost srednjoškolaca ilustraciji dok se osmoškolcima u jednakoj mjeri dopada i priča. Dakle, i priča i crtež su najdojmljiviji element *Alana Forda* većini osmoškolaca. Razmišljajući o dobivenim odgovorima možemo zapaziti kako je srednjoškolcima uz specifični humorni diskurs dojmjljiva likovna strana izraza. Ilustracija *Alana Forda* osim informativne ima i estetsku funkciju. Povratna informacija upućuje kako učenice veću važnost pridaju estetskoj funkciji ilustracije.

Većinu je ispitanika epizoda "Broj 1" nasmijala, što je dokaz pozitivne percepcije stripa među učenicima osnovnih i srednjih škola te potvrda hipoteze o pozitivnoj učeničkoj reakciji na smjehovni diskurs *Alana Forda*. Komentari o junacima stripa pokazuju kako su učenici u ranijoj fazi školovanja razvili sposobnost etičke i socijalne karakterizacije likova. Budući da u kvalitetnim stripovima dolazi do izražaja poetska funkcija hibridnoga diskursa, jezik *Alana Forda* originalnim sklopom postaje središnji makrostilem popularnoga stripa (Katnić-Bakaršić, 2007). Mnogi učenici su upravo tekstovnu komponentu *Alana Forda* izdvojili kao najveću vrijednost stripa, navodeći brojne primjere, poput rečenice jednog od junaka priče: "*Bolje živjeti 100 godina kao bogataš nego sedam dana u bijedi!*" Stoga je osebjuni diskurs stripa s lakoćom dekodiran. Ironija i sarkazam bliski su mladima jer se oni koriste humorom kao određenom vrstom bunta i pobune protiv konfuzne stvarnosti koja ih okružuje. Protagonisti crtanih pustolovina živopisni su likovi prepuni nedostataka, ali simpatični i snalazljivi pa se čitatelji lako poistovjećuju s njima. Kako autori neprestano podsjećaju na tu činjenicu, čin čitanja postaje svojevrsna katarza sa snažnom terapijskom ulogom. Osim toga, šala kao manifestacija humora u *Alanu Fordu* služi kao korektiv, svojevrsno objašnjenje kontradikcija (Davies, 1984).

Ispitanici su dobro uočili namjere autora stripa i njihovu kritičku oštricu spram društvene nepravde i "*kritiziranje društvenih slabosti*". Dominantan postotak odgovora upućuje na učeničko prepoznavanje idejnoga sloja teksta i svijest kako popularni strip osim eskapističko- zabavnoga karaktera ima i dimenziju osvješćivanja, osude socijalnoga raslojavanja. Tu dimenziju stripovnog iskaza prepoznale su obje dobne skupine, i osmaši i maturanti. No, učenici nisu jedinstveni u navođenju razloga zašto smatraju da se strip *može/ne može* koristiti u nastavi. Oni koji se slažu s mogućnošću primjene stripa u nastavi upozoravaju kako on prilično vjerno prikazuje socijalne probleme, nalaze da je poučan te može pomoći učenicima u razvijanju vlastitih stavova o određenom problemu. Niječni odgovori osmaša djelimice upućuju na konzervativnost školskoga sustava koji ne potiče među mladima u pravoj mjeri kritičku svijest o valorizaciji izvannastavnih sadržaja, dok srednjoškolci u svojim zapažanjima naglašavaju infantilnost i zabavni karakter literature za opuštanje.

Većina ispitanika se slaže s tezom o praktičnoj primjeni stripa u nastavi, navodeći njegovu popularnost među mladima, zabavni ali i poučni karakter te poštivanja učeničkih interesa, u vidu smanjenja monotonije poučavanja i razonode tijekom zahtjevnoga učenja novoga gradiva. Za razliku od afirmativnog stava prema tiskovini, manjina koja misli suprotno navodi kako je čitanje stripa zapravo gubitak vremena jer nije dovoljno poučan pa ne može poslužiti u obrazovne svrhe, osim toga trud oko "ovakve vrste literature" neće se valorizirati u nastavi ili na državnoj maturi. Ipak, mišljenje jednog učenika osmog razreda – *uz humor i šale zabavnije je učiti*, ne bi smjelo ostaviti ravnodušnim niti jednog odgojitelja. Mnogi su učenici naveli kako bi bilo zanimljivo čitati strip u školi jer se smijehom mladi lakše nose s problemima te se smanjuje jaz između škole i životne stvarnosti.

Kada je riječ o obrazovnim područjima, spomenuti su gotovo svi nastavni predmeti, stoga će se rasprava detaljnije osvrnuti na mišljenja o mogućnosti primjene stripa u nastavi. Područje materinskoga jezika je očekivano najzastupljenije – mnogi su ispitanici naveli Hrvatski jezik kao idealan nastavni predmet u kojem se može primijeniti strip. Učenici su davali primjere praktične uporabe stripa, a najviše odgovora bilo je usmjereno sadržajima lektire pokazujući kako osmaši i maturanti strip doživljavaju dobrom alternacijom školskoj lektiri. Promišljajući o različitim pristupima interpretaciji književnoga teksta ne bi trebalo zanemarivati učeničke sklonosti, već u sklopu književnosti rabiti strip kao zanimljivo nastavno sredstvo u razvoju čitateljskih interesa, poglavito među populacijom osmoškolaca.³² Nastavnici mogu iskoristiti humorne interpretacije Homerove *Ilijade* i *Odiseje* ili Shakespeareova *Hamleta* u *Alanu Fordu* kako bi učenike motivirali za čitanje klasika svjetske književnosti. Problem obvezne lektire u nastavnoj praksi nije u fokusu ovoga rada,³³ tek valja naglasiti kako i rezultati ovoga istraživanja upućuju na potrebu revizije lektirnih naslova i metoda rada u poticanju kulture čitanja među učenicima osnovnih i srednjih škola.

Kvalitetna i rado čitana stripovna izdanja poput *Alana Forda* mogu se bez teškoća integrirati u obrazovni sustav medijske kulture. Područje medijske kulture obuhvaćeno je programom Hrvatskoga jezika, u pojedinim srednjim školama Medijska kultura je zaseban izborni predmet (Salezijanska klasična gimnazija). Osim što pozitivne opservacije o jeziku stripa potvrđuju inicijalnu hipotezu o učeničkoj naklonost prema

³² U osmim razredima strip se može iskoristiti u komparativnoj analizi s književnim predloškom po kojem je nastao. Na taj će način učenici, osim motivacije za čitanje u školi, učiti o specifičnom vizualnom mediju (Maurovićevi stripovi rađeni po književnim predlošcima – *Ognjem i mačem*, *Čuvaj se senjske ruke*). Metodički rad sa stripom sastoji se od komparativne analize u kojoj se uspoređuju sličnosti i razlike između stripa i literarnoga predloška, nakon čega slijede zadaci za samostalni rad i stvaralačko izražavanje. Ovakvim se metodičkim modelom potvrđuje koliko je strip delikatna crtačka disciplina koja svojom likovnošću povoljno djeluje i na psihičke procese.

³³ Prije osam godina u Rijeci je provedeno istraživanje o čitateljskim interesima srednjoškolaca (Lazzarich, 2004). Na upit što bi lekturu učinilo zanimljivijom, učenici su naglasili kako bi teme književnih tekstova morale biti bliskije mladima s više humora i akcije. U odabiru najdražih naslova iskazali su interes za ljubavnu tematiku (*Patnje mladog Werthera*) i humor koji je mladima drag i blizak (*Gostioničarka Mirandolina*). Literatura prožeta humorom potiče mlade na druženje s knjigom i u slobodno vrijeme. Osim zabave i ugodnih raspoloženja koje potiče takva književnost, ona poticajno djeluje u intelektualnom smislu, omogućujući mladima da spoznaju smisao i filozofiju života.

popularnoj tiskovini, dobiveni odgovori nude mogućnost uključivanja učenika u promatranje zanimljive jezične interakcije: kroz interpretaciju stripa učenici će zapažati i stilske mogućnosti njegova jezičnoga koda. Učenici osmih razreda navodili su kako bi na satu povijesti mogli čitati povijesne stripove, koji mogu poslužiti i kao alternativna nastava. Navođenje povijesnoga područja ne začuđuje jer strip nudi brojne mogućnosti slikovitog prikazivanja obrazovnih sadržaja (*"na satu povijesti mogli bi čitati povijesne stripove"*; ubačene priče Broja 1 – npr. o Odiseju; kroz analizu likova - edukativno za opuštanje; u povijesti kad Broj 1 priča svoju verziju povijesnoga događaja"). Važan element Alana Forda jest specifičan pogled na važne povijesne događaje iz kuta Broja Jedan, vođe grupe TNT: autori deridijanski dekonstruiraju povijesnu faktografiju nudeći duhovitu verziju određenoga događaja.³⁴

Promišljajući o nastavnim fazama učenici su u svojim opservacijama obuhvatili gotovo sve etape sata. Humorni diskurs stripa može se ostvariti u različitim fazama nastavnog procesa (Lazarich, 2011). On je iskoristiv poglavito u fazi motivacije: osim što stvara pozitivno ozračje, vedro započinjanje sata sa šalom i smijehom pomaže učenicima da se opuste, dok im duhovite stanke tijekom nastave omogućuju kratki predah, dobrodošao pri intenzivnim intelektualnim naporima. U središnjem dijelu sata, prilikom obradbe novih obrazovnih sadržaja i provjere znanja, duhoviti primjeri mogu smanjiti anksioznost na intelektualno zahtjevnim ispitima (McMorris, Urbach, i Connor, 1985). Daljnjim istraživanjem, na primjer, mogli bi se utvrditi razlozi zbog kojih učenici strukovnih škola s pretežito muškom populacijom češće pozitivno procjenjuju uporabu stripa u poučavanju od svojih kolega/ica u "ženskim" školama.

Druga skupina kvalitativnih podataka ponudila je zanimljiva iskustvena razmišljanja ispitanika o nastavnicima i njihovoj porabi humora. Gotovo stopostotna ujednačenost stavova učenika osnovnih i srednjih škola potvrđuje u kojoj je mjeri učenički doživljaj nastavnika određen njihovim osjećajem za humor. Samim tim humor bitno definira odnos između sudionika nastavnoga procesa. Govoreći o učinkovitosti nastave opservacije osmaša i maturanata pokazuju kako način rada duhovitih nastavnika u visokom postotku učenicima osobito odgovara. Njihovi odgovori potvrđuju naklonost prema duhovitim nastavnicima, zbog čega ispitanici pokazuju više povjerenja prema smijehu naklonjenim profesorima. Srdačnost i humor su preduvjet kvalitetnih odnosa i mirne koegzistencije u razrednoj sredini.³⁵ Gotovo svi se slažu u razmišljanju kako sklonost šali i smijehu neće imati negativne posljedice na obrazovna postignuća, po čemu istraživanje u riječkim školama korelira s rezultatima europskih i svjetskih

³⁴ U njihovoj interpretaciji, na primjer, slavni Leonida "junački" umire u Termopilskom klancu zaustavivši najezdu Perzijanca tako što kukavički bježi, ali se zbog enormne debljine zaglavi u klancu. Kroz duhovitu dioptriju talijanskih autora prošla je čitava galerija povijesnih ličnosti, poput Homera, Karla Velikog, Julija Cezara, Jeana Lafittea, generala Custeru i drugih.

³⁵ Istražujući sličnu problematiku Sprecher i Regan (2002) utvrdile su kako su intrinzične osobine poput otvorenosti, ljubaznosti i osjećaja za humor najpoželjne unutar svih vrsta odnosa. Mannell i McMahon (1982) ističu kako humor može funkcionirati poput kratke "djelotvorne igre" (*Play - activity*) koja se može provesti tijekom nastave, te naglašavaju povezanost humora kao aktivnosti i mentalnoga zdravlja. U školskom okruženju prilagodljivi nastavnici koriste humor i tako podižu razinu kvalitete rada svojih učenika puno brže nego oni koji ne koriste humor. Bryant i sur. (1980) apostrofirali su kako učenici duhovite nastavnike doživljavaju boljim predavačima od onih učitelja koji ne koriste humor.

metodičara.³⁶ Po mišljenju učenika nastavnici koji rabe humor daleko su učinkovitiji u prijenosu nastavnoga gradiva. Mladi su svjesni u kojoj mjeri trema i strah mogu biti prepreka usvajanju znanja i učenju, stoga učitelj humor bitno utječe na konačni uspjeh. Učenici osmih razreda i srednjoškolci slažu se u jednom – ako nastavnik uspije uspostaviti poticajno ozračje, učenici će vjerojatno biti zainteresiraniji za učenje. Humor je motivirajući čimbenik i svojevrsan katalizator pozitivne angažiranosti u nastavnome procesu. Uglavnom prevladavaju gotovo ujednačeni afirmativni stavovi o duhovitim odgojiteljima. Rijetka negativna zapažanja rasvjetljavaju tamniju stranu nepedagoškoga pristupa i upućuju na kritičko izrugivanje i ismijavanje učenika od strane odgojitelja. Smijeh u učionici može imati i negativne posljedice, ako se koristi za porugu, podsmijeh, kao izvor predrasuda i sl. Riječ je o destruktivnoj strani humora: sramoćenje i sarkastično ismijavanje njegovi su oblici s negativnim predznakom.³⁷ Ovakvim primjerima nije mjesto unutar poželjne međuljudske interakcije. Dobrohotnost smijanja je bitno obilježje koje humor čini pozitivnom i poželjnom društvenom pojavom.

Učenički stavovi potvrđuju činjenicu da mladima nedostaje ugone koja bi im posredno potvrdila osjećaj slobode i zadovoljstva u školskom prostoru. Riječ je o važnoj odrednici u vrijednosnome sustavu mlade osobe. Ocjene ispitanika o značaju humora i važnosti ozračja slobode u odnosu između nastavnika i učenika tjeraju na razmišljanje i upozoravaju odgojitelje na korigiranje ponašanja u razrednom odjeljenju. Primjena objavljenih materijala sa smiješnim elementima, poput *Alana Forda*, može biti posebno učinkovita.³⁸ Odgojitelji bi bez poteškoća mogli iskoristiti naklonost mladih prema stripu i prenijeti njegov vizualno-literarni potencijal u svoju učionicu. Humorni diskurs stripa inicira povoljno psihosocijalno ozračje, samim tim je inspiracija za prijam sadržaja u humorističkoj formi izrazitija od uobičajene, čime se povećava efikasnost u procesu komunikacije (Ilić, 1987).

Zaključak

Smisao za humor veoma je poželjan unutar interpersonalnih odnosa u odgojno-obrazovnome procesu. Istraživanje u riječkim školama potvrdilo je pozitivan stav ispitanika prema duhovitim nastavnicima. Rezultati istraživanja ukazuju da je humor

³⁶ Gotham i Christophel (1990) nisu na većem uzorku ispitanika naišli na negativne stavove o učiteljima koji koriste humor tijekom predavanja. Pokazalo se da nastavnici koji redovito uključuju humor u nastavi učinkovitije prenose sadržaje svoga predmeta (Downs, Javidi, i Nussbaum, 1988).

³⁷ Matijević (1994) spominje "*pedagogijsku zoologiju*" kojom nastavnici kadšto javno etiketiraju svoje učenike, nazivajući ih pogrdnim epitetima i nadimcima. U verbalnom sukobu učenici ne ostaju dužni, a svaka generacija obogaćuje taj neukoričeni pedagoški rječnik.

³⁸ Strip se u osmim razredima osnovne škole može primijeniti na različite načine: kao lingvometodički predložak uključuje sposobnost imaginacije u sadržajima koji to inače ne nude (npr. gramatika), u funkciji razvijanja čitateljskih sposobnosti strip može biti predstavljen kao alternativni materijal u odnosu na tradicionalni udžbenik, kao poticaj kreativnog razmišljanja i uključivanja čitateljskih vještina. U integriranom pristupu strip postaje moćno metodičko sredstvo, stoga ova umjetnička forma dobiva svoj puni smisao u nastavnoj praksi. Stjepko Težak naglašavao je poticajne mogućnosti stripa u razvoju komunikacijskih kompetencija, uvijek imajući na umu cjelokupnu obrazovnu vertikalu.

osobito važan za afirmaciju komunikacije i zasnivanja povjerenja u poučavanju. Vedrinom i duhovitošću nastavnici uspostavljaju ugodnije radno ozračje u kojem se bolje surađuje. Učiteljima koji nemaju smisla za humor ili su indiferentni prema njemu nedostaje kreativnosti, što je česti uzrok devalvacije obrazovnoga humora. Dobiveni rezultati također upućuju na smanjen interes za medij stripa u odnosu na prethodna desetljeća, pogotovo među srednjoškolskom dobnom skupinom ispitanika. Za razliku od svojih starijih kolega učenici u osnovnim školama pokazuju veće zanimanje za popularni medij pa valja promišljati o mogućnostima njegove funkcionalne primjene u poučavanju. Strip potiče ozračje ugođe i radosti u učionici, a mladi su u kontaktu s dobro poznatom predloškom spontani i opušteniji, što otvara put snažnijem emocionalnm povezivanju između učitelja i učenika. U kurikulskom planiranju valja težiti kreativnim nastavnim strategijama kako bi se uspostavila lakša i uspješnija komunikacija u triadi *učitelj – nastavno gradivo – učenik*. U metodičko polje Hrvatskoga jezika uključeni su sadržaji različitih supstratnih znanosti (Bežen, 2008), stoga se stripovni diskurs nadaje kao djelatan metodološki instrumentarij u procesu pouke. U tom kontekstu metodiku stripa nipošto ne bi trebalo zanemariti jer primjerci visokih likovnih dosega, poput *Alana Forda*, imaju brojne prednosti koje se mogu iskoristiti u nastavi. U osnovnoj školi strip je blizak jezično-umjetničkom području, stoga je prije svega primjenjiv u području Hrvatskoga jezika i Likovne kulture, dok je na srednjoškolskom stupnju iskoristiv u obrazovnim područjima Povijesti i Medijske kulture. U odnosu na tradicionalnu paradigmu metodika stripa nudi sljedeće suvremene postupke: promicanje učenikove osobnosti i poštivanje njegovih odgojno-obrazovnih potreba, sadržajno povezivanje različitih nastavnih predmeta te metodičku raznovrsnost nastave. Svojom metaforičkom suptilnošću *Alan Ford* u osnovnoj školi može pomoći mladima u razumijevanju svijeta koji ih okružuje. Rezultati provedenog empirijskog istraživanja potvrđuju utemeljenost navedenih teorijskih promišljanja. Bliskost i primjerenost popularnoga medija pridonosi otvorenosti odgojno-obrazovnoga procesa, nastava postaje zanimljiv i dinamičan proces a učionica mjesto višesmjerne komunikacije i slobode izražavanja. Nastavnici sami mogu odlučiti na koji način popularni medij iskoristiti kao kreativno nastavno sredstvo jer humorni diskurs stripa može pridonijeti poticajnom ozračju u školskom prostoru, potvrđujući načela suvremene metode kako učenje s radošću nije tek retorička figura.