

An Inexhaustible Source of Creativity and Imagination

Miriam G. Martinez, Junko Yokota and Charles Temple. 2017. *Thinking and Learning Through Children's Literature*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield. 213 pp. ISBN 978-1-4758-2151-2

Through its various aspects, such as developing literacy, informing or encouraging learners' imagination, literature has been an omnipresent concept in education as well as in everyday life. As education paradigms are in constant change, teachers face many challenges in their search for innovative approaches to help their students achieve the educational aims of the 21st century. Renowned American experts on children's literature and teaching, Miriam G. Martinez, Junko Yokota and Charles Temple have made a valuable contribution to this topic by compiling and sharing many theoretical and practical ideas under the title *Thinking and Learning Through Children's Literature*. Published in 2017 by Rowman & Littlefield, the book addresses many aspects of teaching literature to children, and includes both the theory and practical application.

Martinez, Yokota and Temple have found an efficient way to reach everyone who is in search of facts about children's literature and ideas for its use in school practice. Their use of language and their decision to address the reader in the second person helps give the impression of a pleasant and supportive teacher-to-teacher exchange of ideas. Still, its scholarly and theoretical aspect is extensive and soundly supported by many references to other works and research. Throughout the book's five chapters, the authors present a well-structured set of topics which range from explaining specific reading processes and basic genre categorisations, to describing practical solutions for motivating and involving children in literature or integrating it in teaching across the curriculum.

Reading is a deep and complex process, and understanding this process can be a challenging, but also an interesting journey. The first chapter starts by describing the goals of 21st-century reading, such as making personal connections to texts, developing deep understanding and critical thinking, recognising craft and structure, and creating intertextual links. The authors point out the importance of meaningfulness in encountering literature by describing the process of literary meaning-making. In all these analyses, they focus on the Reader Response theory and its different developmental, social, cultural and textual aspects. Each chapter ends with a list of recommended works for young readers (accompanied by short plot summaries and indicators of age suitability), references and resources, as well as a section entitled "Want to know more?", which includes activities and discussion ideas for practitioners.

The extensive and lucid description of the reading process is followed by an overview of the main categories of children's literature: fiction, nonfiction and poetry. In the second chapter, entitled "How Literature Works", the authors describe various literary genres, emphasising the characteristics which determine their functions and readers' responses, such as plot structure or visual elements. Each genre is illustrated with examples from children's literature, mostly focusing on American works. The chapter also includes well-structured charts with key terms which are clearly and concisely explained, and short descriptions of selected literary works. In the conclusion, the authors state that this chapter should serve as a foundation for selecting books for students, as well as for planning teaching units.

One of the most useful aspects of *Thinking and Learning Through Children's Literature* is its abundance of examples, both practical and literary. Throughout the book, there are specific sections in every chapter which function as practical guidelines for teaching. The sections entitled “Don't Miss...” include important works of children's literature, while “Technology Tips”, “Try This”, and “Reaching All Students” suggest possible digital materials or other teaching and communication ideas. The sections entitled “What Does the Expert Say?” include interesting interviews with other authors or teachers, while “What Do You Think?” presents practical questions for readers' own critical consideration. After chapter two, there is a special section which provides a comprehensive description of the picturebook *Freedom in Congo Square* by C.B. Weatherford and R.G. Christie, as well as a detailed discussion of the historical context it describes, and a consideration of its visual and textual elements.

In their work, Martinez, Yokota and Temple highlight the importance of a literature-rich school context, and of teachers setting good examples. The following two chapters are an extensive source of practical ideas about working with literature in the classroom. The third chapter, “Inviting Children in to Literature”, suggests how to create an everyday school environment which promotes reading. Here, the reader can discover ideas for organising a classroom library, learn about the importance of reading aloud or storytelling, and the criteria for selecting classroom-appropriate books. The following chapter, “Let's Talk About Literature”, includes guidelines for deeper discussions and for promoting an understanding of literary works among students. It also refers to the second chapter by further explaining the ideas for exploring the main features of literature, such as settings, characters, plots, themes and different points of view. In this chapter, the authors point out the importance and possibilities of literary response, for instance through dramatization, writing or discussion. The included ideas, goals and desirable outcomes are based on the Common Core Standards, the current educational standard in the United States.

Modern approaches to teaching advocate a holistic perspective, which is also reflected in the integration of a diverse educational content. Literature holds great potential for such strategies and methods, both through correlation with other subjects or taken as a focus in language teaching. The last chapter, “Literary and Content Units”, deals with the role of literature in the general curriculum. International readers may find the authors' claim that the literature curriculum has been neglected in American education interesting, especially when the book makes it clear how rich the American children's literature market is. In response to this situation, the authors highlight the importance of a well-organised teaching unit dedicated to literature, offering advice on planning, developing different types of literary units, and various activities. In addition, they share ideas and tips for determining goals, selecting appropriate books and creating efficiently structured content-based units.

A prominent trait of this book is its strong educational and cultural rootedness within the American context. Firstly, the reader can observe the high degree of autonomy of the American education system, seen in the amount of free choice teachers have. Most of the literary examples are those of American authors and may therefore be unavailable or even unknown to readers from other countries. Besides, the American cultural context is very heterogeneous, which is reflected in the many practical ideas and literary topics which are discussed. All of this could present an obstacle for the international reader, but, on the other

hand, it can be perceived as an opportunity for learning about a different educational system and drawing comparisons in order to generate new and effective teaching solutions.

Exploring *Thinking and Learning Through Children's Literature* can show how teaching literature to children is a multi-layered process, rich in challenges and creative potential. The variety of ideas, advice and resources, supported with a clear, positive and motivating expression, make the book accessible and understandable to both practitioners in need of new knowledge and students and researchers of children's literature. While they do suggest many practical ideas, Martinez, Yokota and Temple believe that using this book should only be a starting point in exploring possibilities for raising lifelong readers. Teaching literature to children, as the title itself says, should be a never-ending process of both thinking and learning.

Katarina Kralj

Dnevnik kao književna vrsta

Dragica Dragun. 2016. *Dnevnička proza u hrvatskoj književnosti za djecu i mlade*. Osijek: Ogranak Matice hrvatske u Osijeku. 207 str. ISBN 978-953-242-116-3

Objavljivanjem znanstvenih radova o djelima koja su namijenjena djeci i mladima pokazuje se da takva književnost itekako otvara prostor za nova književnoteorijska proučavanja. Samim time, dječja književnost i književnost za mlade otkriva svoje vrijednosti.

Dragica Dragun autorica je koja je u svojoj knjizi *Dnevnička proza u hrvatskoj književnosti za djecu i mlade* u središte svojega znanstvenoga rada stavila upravo djela koja se tiču dječje i adolescentske publike. U „Uvodnoj bilješci“ autorica se prisjeća zgrade s putovanja na kojemu je kupila dnevnik. Iako nije vodila bilješke, dnevnik ju je zainteresirao za čitanje autobiografske proze što je prvo rezultiralo doktorskom disertacijom o dnevničkoj prozi, a naposljetku i objavljivanjem knjige.

Knjiga je podijeljena u tri veće cjeline s podnaslovima. U prvoj cjelini naslova „Dnevnik – model autobiografske proze“ Dragun predstavlja postojeća teorijska promišljanja o autobiografskoj prozi. U tome kontekstu osvrće se na začetke teorijskih proučavanja autobiografske proze u Hrvatskoj, problematizira autobiografiju kao žanr, detektira signale prepoznavanja autobiografskoga teksta te nudi razlikovne odrednice autobiografije i autobiografske fikcije. Također, posebnu pozornost usmjerava na dnevnik kao autobiografski žanr i na karakteristike dnevničke proze kao što su opozicija subjektivnosti i objektivnosti, kronologija pripovijedanja, naratološke odlike dnevničkoga diskursa, itd. Pritom se oslanja na teorijska promišljanja Andreje Zlatar, Gérarda Genettea, Philippea Lejeunea, Helene Sablić Tomić i dr.

U drugoj cjelini naslova „Dnevnička proza za djecu i mlade“ Dragun definira korpus od 22 naslova namijenjenih djeci i mladima koji će poslužiti za analiziranje dnevničkoga diskursa. Djela obuhvaćaju vremenski raspon od 1938. do 2015. godine čiji niz započinje djelom Zore Ruklić *Iz dnevnika jedne djevojčice*. Prije samih analiza i interpretacija dnevničkih tekstova, autorica iznosi svoja opažanja o pojavi dnevničke sintagme u naslovima djela. Naime, konstatira da se u dnevničkoj prozi za djecu i mlade dnevnička sintagma javlja u samome naslovu ili podnaslovu, a ponekad je izostavljena što potkrjepljuje