

## Reading in Slovene High-School Literature Classes

Alenka Žbogar<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

(Curricular) reading in high-school<sup>2</sup> literature classes aims to achieve the objectives of literature instruction, in particular to acquire systemic and systematic literary knowledge, and to develop literary competence (Žbogar 2019), cultural competence, and general cultural knowledge. It is implemented through problem-based teaching of literature. Given the specifics and time constraints of work at school, it is recommended that it be combined with homework. Students analyze motifs, themes, and simple language, stylistic, conceptual, and message elements of literary texts at home on their own, and they collect simple literary historical and theoretical information. In the literature class, they can then focus on analyzing more complex linguistic, stylistic, conceptual, and message elements, as well as on synthesis, evaluation of the text, and in-depth contextualization. The testing and assessment of knowledge obtained through a problem-based literature class should be individualized and based on prompt, regular, appropriately frequent, comprehensible, clear feedback related to learning outcomes (learning objectives) and criteria of excellence. Literary competence can be developed through active close reading of fiction, screened for student reception, which is discussed in depth. The teacher's task is to facilitate students' reading efforts with appropriate methods and forms of work, providing diverse reading strategies. An aversion to reading can also be avoided by following the principle of "less is more." This does not mean lowering standards but raising them: through (meta)cognitive-critical curriculum reading of literature, we move from a focus on quantity to in-depth development of higher cognitive processes.

---

<sup>1</sup> The author acknowledges financial support from the Slovenian Research Agency (research core funding No. P6-0239).

<sup>2</sup> *Gimnazija* 'gymnasium' is a university preparatory high school with more demanding literature curriculum than other, technically oriented high schools. After high school, gymnasium students take an examination (*matura*). *Matura* is a school exit exam to receive a diploma and to qualify for university entrance. Thus it is not only a final examination but also a continuation regulating the transition from secondary to higher education, as is the case in many European countries. *Matura* is a national examination with equal conditions for all candidates, who take it simultaneously, following the same procedures and rules and in accordance with the same criteria of assessment. See: [https://www.ric.si/general\\_matura/general\\_information](https://www.ric.si/general_matura/general_information).

**Key words:** (meta)cognitive-critical curricular reading of literature, high-school literature classes, problem-based high school literature class

### **1. The literature curriculum for high schools and its influence on classroom teaching**

According to the Organization and Financing of Education Act, the teaching of Slovene must provide general education and an occupation to the entire population, and the highest possible level of education to the largest possible portion of the population while maintaining the established level of rigor. It must also provide for the development and attainment of the highest possible level of creativity for the largest possible portion of the population. The Educational Plan for Slovene in Gymnasium governs the teaching of literature. The basic objectives are (general) development of the ability to comprehend, acquisition of literary knowledge, expanded awareness of matters related to literature, engagement with criticism, and placing literature in the broader context of cultural development (Poznanovič Jezeršek at al. 2008: 16–17). Reading literature in the curriculum differs from leisure reading in part by its “systematization and organization of the reading process, in its striving for readers to comprehend as many relevant components of literary texts as possible and acquire necessary reading experience, understanding, and reading strategies” (Krakar Vogel 2020: 32). In teaching Slovene, other kinds of more or less formalized literature reading encourage reading—for instance, the Društvo Bralna značka (Reading Badge Society), the Cankar Prize competition, and also informal or leisure reading. Various kinds of reading differ according to their demands, goals, and purpose. Curricular reading strives to achieve the goals of learning about literature according to educational plans, especially for the acquisition of systemic and systematic knowledge of literature and development of literary abilities (Žbogar 2019a), as well as literary culture and broadmindedness. Curricular reading of fiction is divided into experiential, critical, and creative reading (Žbogar 2014a). Critical reading aims at a systematic activation of cognitive and metacognitive processes. Since (meta)cognitive and critical reading in literature classes are not conceptually identical but usually closely related, this kind of reading is called (meta)cognitive-critical curricular reading. Leisure reading does not correspond to the corresponding criteria and standards and as a result is less regulated and formalized, and more subject to young readers’ personal interests and preferences. In their free time, they read mostly for entertainment, distraction, and relaxation. They tend to opt for easy reading, including popular literature, which they perceive as aesthetically, morally, and functionally devalued literature (Hladnik 1983).

The processes, manner, goals, and purposes of leisure reading are not formally regulated, and are, of course, not tested or evaluated in the school system; therefore, they remain on the level of initial emotional and experiential response. Curricular reading of fiction deepens and builds on initial experiential responses, not “provoking ‘resistance’ only because of the ‘unattractiveness’ of a [literary] selection, but to a great extent also because of the effort it is necessary to apply in reflecting upon it and expressing one’s self during advanced reading” (Krakar Vogel 2019: 46). This transpires on multiple cognitive reception levels, depending on students’ reception, cognitive, and imaginative abilities; grade level and type of educational institution; the nature of the literary text; and also learning goals, especially the interaction of experiential, (meta)cognitive-critical, and creative reading.

In the Slovene school system, from the time gymnasium educational plans were reformed in 1998 and updated in 2008, despite relevant 2003 research, the shortcomings of the 1998 plan became evident. They resulted in low reading literacy of students who were surveyed; the 2003 research results were not taken into consideration, because the 2008 educational plan includes ten percent more required texts from world literature. After being in force for more than a decade, it is clear that the plan negatively impacts quality of learning and performance. Slovene literature teaching remains for the most part unproductive; it encourages students’ rote learning. A further problem with the educational plan is that it insufficiently accounts for young persons’ demands; it includes quite a number of texts that are thematically alien to them (Appleyard 1994)—for example, Madame de La Fayette’s *The Princesse de Clèves*, Jean Racine’s *Phèdre*, Stendhal’s *The Black and the White*, Nikolai Gogol’s *Dead Souls*, and Julian Barnes’s *Talking It Over*. The task of those who set the curriculum is to identify required texts that meet the criterion of suitable reception; teachers’ task is to acquaint students with various reading strategies that ease reading challenges. Resistance to reading can also be avoided by respecting the maxim “less is more,” which does not mean lowering standards but raising them: (meta)cognitive-critical reading means a move from quantity to quality—that is, to more intensive development of higher thought processes.

In 2003, I researched the correlation between literary knowledge and literary competence among 2.39% of the third-year students (i.e., 153 third-year students in four Slovene gymnasiums; Žbogar 2003a). In order to increase the reliability and validity of the results, gymnasiums in central and other parts of Slovenia were surveyed. The first part of the research checked their theoretical knowledge of narrative genres. We proceeded from the hypothesis that excellent knowledge of literary genres and sub-genres

influences the experience of literature as well as student readers' interest and literary and tastes. I posited that they would be able to apply their knowledge of narrative genres to unfamiliar texts. It turned out that a literary text's thematic make up and stylistic characteristics primarily determine its attractiveness, while a text's complexity and ideas do not especially factor in. The research results led to the conclusion that a reader with developed literary competence and applicable literary knowledge understands a text more easily and more quickly, and therefore reads it with greater interest, increasing the probability of liking it. The research showed that a more demanding literary text must be treated more thoroughly and comprehensively. That led to a recommendation for so-called reading for (and with) understanding and for repeated close reading of (the most demanding) literary texts. The conclusion was that overly demanding content without adequate time in school can cause resistance to reading and a resultingly low level of reading culture. The research indicated that third-year students better recognize what a novella is (as compared with a novel) but are unable to apply theoretical knowledge when reading an unfamiliar text. In view of the fact that the 2008 educational plan increased the number of required texts and contexts (by at least forty percent) (Žbogar 2015), the conclusion was that relatively low literary competence and shaky literary knowledge is the result of too little thoughtful and intensive engagement of higher cognitive processes that are activated in the phase between analyzing and synthesizing relations and evaluating what has been read. Since it turned out that not even excellent literary knowledge increases the level of literary competence—that is, the ability to activate personal potential in complex situations—the recommendation was to devote more time and attention in the classroom to the phases of interpretation that encourage higher thought processes. On this basis, we developed a problem-based, creative learning plan for literature (Žbogar 2013) that proceeds from students' initial, experiential responses and focuses on solving literary problems. This demands the activation of (meta)cognitive-critical curricular reading. The research results have only been gradually introduced in Slovene schools since 2020, because “findings from literary studies and related disciplines... are incorporated into teaching according to goals for a certain student population, and in each case on the principles of their thoroughness, currency, scholarly assessment, and scientific grounding” (Krakar Vogel 2020: 25). This means that only thoroughly assessed and reliably verified scientific findings from literary studies and specialized pedagogy are introduced into the Slovene school system.

Already in 2003, there was evidence of the excessive demands of the 1998 educational plan for gymnasiums. The 2008 educational plan was less explicit than that of 1998 as regards allocation of hours, their bases, the

number of hours devoted to a given text, and listings of required texts. The choice is left to teacher discretion, but the fact is that the 560 hours devoted to treating the prescribed amount of language and literature materials covered in four years of gymnasium is simply too little. During four years, the students in literature classes encounter at least 118 texts in full or in excerpts, and read at least twenty full texts (five per year) at home. From the first year until graduation they become acquainted with at least 138 required texts—leaving aside recommended elective ones—from Slovene and world literature in a maximum of 280 class hours. It should be noted that students usually receive an average of five grades per year in Slovene, three of which are for literature, which means that a minimum of nine hours a year are devoted to tested and grading. (In practice it is more, of course, because teachers must also assign oral grades, and there are usually about thirty students in a class in Slovenia.) Thus, an individual required text can receive less than two hours attention. And there is also the fact that some of the texts are long narrative prose works. (Novels and theoretical literary concepts tied to novels are supposed to comprise twenty of them; and if the thematic focus of the graduation test is devoted to the novel, then at least thirty novels.)

## **2. Different approaches to or models of teaching literature**

As Krakar Vogel points out, “views on teaching literature in gymnasium, which yielded several models, have developed in Slovenia since the second half of the 1970s” (2019: 41). The models were implemented in schools. They evolved “from traditional reproducing in learning to more contemporary transformational approaches, and were grounded in different views of teaching literature, and how, as evidenced time and again, it should equip students to grasp the complex effects of dealing with literature” (Krakar Vogel 2019: 42).

Following the 2008 curricular reform, the so-called systems approach was integrated into teaching literature in addition to reception-communicative and competency approaches (Krakar Vogel 2013: 9–14). The competency approach derives from experiential learning, in which experience is understood as “familiarity and feeling reworked in a holistic process of mastering with the aid of symbolic forms; on the basis of this reworking, the individual’s familiarity and feeling congeal into new patterns of understanding and dealing with a work that are expressed in an individual point of view” (Jank and Meyer 2006: 245). Thus, learning is “a process of building out thought structures, where the student fits his or her fresh findings into existing conceptual networks—that is, he or she ties them into existing understandings, but because of the fresh findings adapts, changes, or

reorganizes his or her thoughts (Rutar Ilc in Rupnik Vec and Kompare 2006: 84). This means that in teaching literature, we draw an analysis of a literary text from so-called experiential reading (Žbogar, 2014a: 551–52)—that is, with (meta)cognitive-critical reading we build out from readers' impressions, feelings, emotions, and experiences, as they well up in the student when coming in contact with the world of literature. The response from the encounter must be respected and then literary competence gradually built. The emotional and motivational level—including opinions, values, and readiness to act—is a component of competence. The emotional and motivational dimension of reading can be strengthened with creative reading. More time and attention can be devoted to it especially in clubs (e.g., drama, creative writing, a school newspaper) related to teaching literature. (Meta)cognitive critical reading comes into play with additional (repeated) interpretive and analytic reading of a literary text and thinking about, reflecting on, and evaluating the personal process of reading. These two processes engage two other important components of literary competence: the perceptual—that is, the capability for complex thought and solving problems, acquiring knowledge, and inquiry—that is, the ability to activating and employ one's potential in complex situations. According to systems literary pedagogy, reading a text proceeds while taking into consideration context, though not in such an expansive form as indicated by systems literary pedagogy (Krakar Vogel, Blažić 2013). It supposes that a class hour for literature moves from viewing a writer as a producer to considering institutions, repertoire, the market, and reader as receiver. My model recommends focusing on the what is communicated, building out a theoretical apparatus to aid in understanding what is read, and placing a text in a cultural and historical context using literary history. The findings and efforts of targeted pedagogy over the past forty years leads to this recommendation.

The proposed model integrates findings from reception-communicative (Žbogar 2003b, Saksida 2003) and systems literary pedagogy (Krakar Vogel, Blažić 2013): it preserves the active student in close contact with the literary text, other students, and teacher, and critically builds out a personal system of knowledge of literary studies (though not in the traditional form of reproducing facts). Starting with literary problems is recommended, with increased emphasis on analysis of texts' hermeneutic parts, synthesis of findings, contextualizing, and evaluating what has been read. At the same time, homework assignments promote individual (independent) literary research, experiential learning, and discovery, which especially in the initial phases of reading and its analysis of motifs and themes, simple linguistic and stylistic, and ideas and messages takes place at home (as an assignment).

Teachers decide what students can do themselves: a quality homework assignment has clear goals that students understand. In the case of distance learning, Pucko and Pečjak's (2016: 55–70) research findings should be considered. They studied middle school students' reading on paper and e-reading, with analysis of a literary text done according to prepared study guides that students can print at home and complete on paper. Their findings show that,

there are not significant differences between students reading on paper and from a computer screen as regards speed of reading, understanding, received effect, interest, or difficulties. There are only significant differences the speed of carrying out tasks—students who printed the text needed less time to answer (Pucko, Pečjak 2016: 55).

### **3. Meta-cognition (thinking about thinking) as a theoretical underpinning for literature teaching in classroom**

Rupnik Vec and Kompare (2006) and others have reported on critical thinking in schools. They find that it can be understood informally (in the framework of rhetoric and argumentation) or within the educational tradition as 1) a set of skills (interpretive, analytical, evaluative, extrapolative, explanatory, and self-evaluative), 2) a set of procedures (research, problem solving, and decision making), or 3) a set of thought processes, including ordering, extrapolating, observing, evaluating, etc. (Rupnik Vec and Kompare 2006: 14). My understanding of (meta)cognitive critical reading of literature relates to critical thinking as a problem-solving skill. Sternberg (2004) views it similarly. He observes that all critical thinking demands different steps that lead from identifying a problem, to defining its nature, its formulation in thought, determining the intellectual and physical sources needed for a solution, forming strategies for solving it, arriving at a solution, to evaluating the solution (Rupnik Vec and Kompare 2006: 24). Critical thinking is thus a competency to be learned and it can be developed throughout life.

According to Wade (1995), the characteristics of a critical thinker are an orientation to posing questions and doing research, the ability to define concepts and problems, the ability to research material applicable to a given explanation, analyzing suppositions tendencies in given decisions, avoidance of emotional conclusions and oversimplification, allowing for and considering differing interpretations of events and phenomena and allowing for ambiguity, and openness (Rupnik Vec and Kompare 2006: 28–31). My model of problem-solving and creative learning about literature, as it is set

forth in a part of *Iz didaktike slovenščine* (On the didactics of Slovene literature, Žbogar 2013), embraces critical thinking skills according to Halpern, who understands them as “strategies with the help of which a person discovers the means to reach a goal” (1996, in Rupnik Vec and Kompare 2006: 31), including the skills of recalling, understanding, and determining the validity of conclusions; analysis of arguments; thinking things over like an intuitive researcher; understanding and use of probability; decision making; planned problem solving; and creative thinking (Rupnik Vec and Kompare 2006: 31–34).

The teacher’s role in problem-solving and creative learning that strives for (meta)cognitive critical reading of literature is primarily that of organizer of students’ creative and research activities. He or she is a moderator, mentor, advisor, researcher, and evaluator who guides students to work with sources, an example, and a work planner. In the phase of cognitive critical reading, the teacher acquaints students with suitable methods and forms of work with a text—for example, with different reading strategies, such as pre-, during, and post-reading strategies (Gradišar and Pečjak 2012).

Using metacognition on their own reading process, students think about their reading effort, reflect on it and evaluate it: they consider which reading strategies afforded them additional insight into what they read and encouraged a different view of the text. All of this facilitates and enhances the interpretive process, helps build out knowledge of literary studies, and prevents reading efforts from giving way to resistance to reading. The latter can also be avoided with a carefully considered selection of required reading: the selection should not be overly broad or narrow. At the same time, it should be screened for reception—that is, close to the experiential, cognitive, and emotional world of young people (Žbogar 2003b). Literary competence can only be properly developed with an adequate amount of literary texts to be read. (A good reader has a rich experience with a variety of fiction.)

#### **4. Strategies for developing metacognition in reading literature**

If the goal is for students to consider their initial experiential reading response and build upon it with objective, critical, rational (logical and analytic) insights into a literary text, then there must be exercises and assignments, questions and literary problems that inspire them to do so. These can be supplemented with different creative activities, which is in keeping with the principles of constructivist teaching. There are complex, in-class simulations. Students are given research assignments or projects. Such work provides corrective knowledge and learning during testing and evaluation of knowledge—for example, by self- and peer evaluation. Other recommended

forms are essays, explanatory notes, reading diaries, research diaries, thought mapping, visual presentations, vlogs, blogs, etc. All of this is known as constructivist oriented learning, which requires an intellectually active students who builds (constructs) knowledge by his or her own efforts, by independent research and/or creative work. During the course of this, two pedagogical principles in particular come to the fore: problem solving (Žbogar 2014b: 20–23) and creativeness (Žbogar 2014b: 25–26). The purpose of this way of teaching literature is to “search for new solutions and/or paths, and to go beyond the use of previously learned rules, approaches, and strategies for reaching a goal” (Marentič Požarnik 2000; Woolfolk, in Rupnik Vec nad Kompare 2006: 255). This facilitates attaining processual goals, especially development of reading competency and interpretation of literary texts, literary research, engaging in critical actualization, development of (general) comprehension abilities and cultural competence, interdisciplinary competence, acquisition of literary knowledge and broader knowledge of literature, and relating it to the broader context of cultural development. This encourages critical consideration of readings and evaluation of literary texts (understood as intellectual acumen for problem solving), but also creativity (a condition of which is a developed ability to evaluate and synthesize findings).

Students faced with a literary problem (a cognitive conflict, a cognitive unknown) come to realizations by dint of their own research work using the most suitable research methods available to solve the problem. In doing so, they develop (meta)cognitive critical thinking—that is, special “macro abilities” (Rupnik Vec, Kompare 2006: 38) by which they develop cognitive strategies. Such literary problems are, for example, the question of how Romantic and realist elements relate to one another in Ivan Tavčar’s *Cvetje v jeseni* (A flower in autumn), adaptation of Classical motifs in Renaissance world literature, and similarities and differences between traditional and contemporary sonnets based on France Prešeren and Milan Jesih’s poetry. Students must first be acquainted with a literary problem and then motivated enough to solve it. They activate their existing knowledge relevant to a solution, then purposefully generalize (consider generalizations) and avoid simplification, transfer their knowledge and competencies to new problem-solving situations (applying them to analyzing unfamiliar literary texts), form their own opinion about the reading (establishing a critical distance from their peers’ opinions), and present their opinions, views, and convictions to their peers and the teacher. They are able properly and extensively to base their views of a literary work on internal literary arguments, taking into consideration the principles of practical stylistics (clarity, cohesion, convincingness, precision, suitability, and correct grammar). They create logical and unambiguous texts about literature (i.e., an explanatory note, pre-essay word lists, an essay, course paper, project, research project, etc.). They base their work on credible, reliable sources and

literature: they are able to select relevant information and distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information. They can weigh different scholarly views of a literary problem and clearly explain whether they agree with them (in whole or in part).

A literary problem can center on ethical and social problems connected with the motifs, themes, and ideas inherent in a literary work, such as relations between generations and ethical questions in a novel, the power of the authorities and individual freedom, mother-son relations, and erotic love at critical times in history. This in particular encourages an interpretive approach to a literary text and activates the emotional and motivational aspect of literary competence (e.g., literary empathy and social criticism). Solving a literary historical or theoretical literary problem also calls for using (primarily) literary knowledge (i.e., the factual level of literary competence). This kind of question or direction appeared on the literature part of the graduation examination especially when it was introduced. It later disappeared. (Starting in 2021, a new subject test catalog for the examination goes into effect with certain changes.) In writing an essay, a candidate must now be able to “compare texts with a thematic focus with other required literary texts on the basis of their characteristics,” and “on the basis of their characteristics, be able to place texts in their wider context or literary historical context familiar from the educational plan” (Ambrož et al. 2019: 17).

When researching a literary problem, students come upon new questions, record them, and discuss them with their peers and teacher, thus delving deeper into the original problem. In doing so, they form various possible solutions and judge them in light of the scholarship. The attempt, for instance, to find arguments for the thesis that in Andrei Makine’s *Knjiga kratkih večnih ljubezni* (*Le livre de brèves amours éternelles*) is a novel or collection of short stories; they weigh how many main characters there are in Drago Jančar’s novella “Smrt pri Mariji Snežni” (“Death at Mary of the Snows”). They can defend the thesis that there are two main characters (Turbin and Semjonov), or the thesis that it is a postmodern idea of repeated fate. The search for arguments to support the thesis that unfavorable historical conditions the main character, a member of the White Guard, was forced to migrate from Bolshevik held Ukraine and only after twenty-seven years on the run finally came to a small village in Prekmurje. He begins to use the name Vladimir Semjonov instead of his real name, Aleksej Vasiljevič Turbin. Fear of the approaching Red Army forces him to believe that this time he will not be able to escape an unforgiving fate, so at the end of WW II he commits suicide. In doing so, student employ critical reading, meaning that they read the novella from different perspectives, take an ethical stance on the reading and a stance on the literary characters’ actions, putting themselves in their situations. They thus develop literary empathy: they attempt, for example, to understand why Semjonov commits suicide, what forced him to do it, and

how those around him viewed his irrational act. There is a class discussion on how to act in similar situations, about what was learned from the reading (e.g., it is seen that even such unfavorable life situations can turn out well despite our expectations; that Semjonov's suicide was a wrongful and irrational act). Interdisciplinary connections are made. In the case of Jančar's novella, historical knowledge is reviewed, especially the situation in Europe at the end of WW I and WW II. Knowing about the White Guard, the Red Army, and the October Revolution helps understand the novella, which means that students must refresh their knowledge of historical conditions at the end of WW I and expand their cultural perspective. They take into account the fact that the White Guard was founded in 1917 as a tsarist military force to fight against the Red Army—that is, an opponent of Bolshevism. The October Revolution was an uprising in Petrograd on the night of 24–25 October 1917, when armed rebels under the leadership of Lenin and the Bolsheviks brought down the provisional government, which led to the Russian civil war, which lasted from 1918 to 1920, resulting in the founding of the Soviet Union on 30 December 1922.

Upon concluding the discussion—that is, comparing perspectives, interpretations, and theories—the students consider the interpretation of Jančar's novella suggested in Readings 4: “The motivation in the novella is the idea of a repeated fate, but a new, alternative possibility is chosen upon repetition” (Ambrož et al. 2003: 268). This leads to a dialectical conclusion, to evaluating perspectives, interpretations, and theories. For instance, those who believe that there is one main character in the novella (Turbin changes his name to Semjonov) debate those who believe that there are two different characters (Turbin and Semjonov only have similar fates).

In primary school, pupils learn different interpretations of the introduction to “Krst pri Savici” (“Baptism on the Savica”), especially of Črtomir's guilt, and in gymnasium different interpretations of his acceptance of Christianity. Boris Paternu (2006), for example, believes that Črtomir is not guilty, but the aggressor Valjhun is (a matter of Romantic irony). In Rupel's opinion, Črtomir is guilty, because acceptance of Christianity was inevitable, for acceptance of Western culture corresponded to evolving social forces (Paternu 2006: 71). Students are encouraged to think about whether they sympathize with rebellion (in line with Paternu's interpretation, which can also spark awareness of evil and tragedy, and even the blindness of a fratricidal struggle). They are challenged to consider whether this foretells the final quatrain and the title of the poem's last part. As Paternu (2006) points out, the title of the poem leads to the conjecture that the story of rebellion will turn in the opposite direction. Religious and moral satisfaction is to be found in the reversal (Paternu 2006). Students can compare the two opposed critics as regards the resolution of Prešeren's poem. In 1904, a Catholic critic wrote, “God give us Črtomirs!” A liberal critic deemed him a negative character, seeing in him weakness and guilt, a real catastrophe for

the Slovene national character (a “werewolf character”) (Paternu 2006: 58–77). In the introduction, Črtomir is a genuine epic hero on a mythical background of gods and signs in the heavens, but at the end of the poem he is a broken, new age character, an enlightened person who can no longer completely accept the faith. He saves Bogomila but he is unsettled in his new age, individual doubt. He is truly a progenitor of contradictory characters in crisis in modern literature, no longer a character of a Romantic poem (but of the novel) (Paternu 2006: 58–77).

Traditional methods of testing and evaluating knowledge are ill suited to problem-solving and creative learning of literature, because it is primarily focused on learning and reading with and for understanding, not memorizing facts and information; therefore, formative assessment is recommended (Holcar Brunauer et al. 2016). Before dealing with new material, students are acquainted with the criteria, forms of evaluation, and learning goals (developing literary competence, enriching literary knowledge, broadening cultural perspectives—not just receiving grades). Evaluative activities and a timeline are described along with expectations for demonstrating knowledge; possible alternative means of evaluation are presented. Involving students in self-evaluation is recommended, as well as peer evaluation (“What is the evidence of my learning? How do I know that I know? How do I evaluate my success with respect to criteria that have been set?” [Holcar Brunauer et al. 2016: 10]). Among other things, a teacher weighs the degree of development of critical thinking for individual students and student development and progress in research abilities. Checks include a teacher’s qualitative feedback in written form (Holcar Brunauer 2016: 6–7). Feedback should be timely and suitably frequent, understandable, clear, and tied to outcomes (learning goals) and criteria for excellence. Qualitative feedback is concrete, specific, and useful.

Reading Per Petterson’s novel *Konje krast* (*Out Stealing Horses*), in which the main character Trond faces the fact that his father left the family for another woman, students must present in an essay how Trond’s mood changes from the beginning to the end of an excerpt, explaining how linguistic and stylistic means reflect the changes (see the guidelines for an interpretive essay in the 2013 graduation examination in Slovene). If a student writes just a brief commentary on Trond’s attitude towards his father, a suggestion for improving the essay, with concrete explanations, ought to be included in the feedback (e.g., presenting his mood means elucidating the main character’s mood so as to explain what changed and how; you describe how Trond essentially changed, and also how his emotional balance changed; you explain how this is reflected in the language—for instance, that sentences towards the end of the excerpt are shorter since in his sadness Trond can no longer speak much, while personification, metaphors, and comparisons express his inability and depression...). In demonstrating knowledge, in addition to solving literary problems, research methods used, research steps,

the ability to critically analyze a literary problem, and writing (use of language) are all considered.

## 5. Conclusion

We can conclude that the principle “less is more,” the basis for the pedagogical model described in this article, does not mean lowering current standards of teaching literature, but raising them. We move from a large number of required texts and contextual information to a smaller number of texts and more qualitative treatment that demands higher order mental processes that also encourage (meta)cognitive critical curricular reading in gymnasium.

University of Ljubljana

- Ambrož, Darinka et al. 2003. *Branja 4: berilo in učbenik za 4. letnik gimnazij in štiriletnih srednjih šol*. Ljubljana: DZS.
- . 2019. *Predmetni izpitni katalog za splošno maturo – slovenščina*. Ljubljana: DiC.
- Gradišar, Ana and Sonja Pečjak. 2012. *Bralne učne strategije*. Ljubljana: ZRSŠ.
- Hladnik, Miran. 1983. *Trivialna literatura*. Ljubljana: DZS.
- Holcar Brunauer, Ada. 2016. *Formativno spremljanje v podporo učenju: priručnik za učitelje in strokovne delavce. Dokazi. Povratna informacija*. LJ: ZRSŠ.
- Jank, Werner and Hilber Meyer. 2006. *Didaktični modeli*. Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.
- Krakar Vogel, Boža and Milena Mileva Blažič. 2013. *Sistemska didaktika književnosti v teoriji in praksi*. Ljubljana: Pedagoški inštitut.
- . 2019. Metode književnega pouka v slovenskem šolskem sistemu. *Jezik in slovstvo* 64.1: 41–50.
- . 2020. *Didaktika književnosti pri pouku slovenščine*. Ljubljana: Rokus.
- Paternu, Boris. 2006. Spremna beseda: Kako brati Krst pri Savici. In Prešeren, F. *Krst pri Savici*, 58–79. Ljubljana: Delo, SZ.
- Poznanovič Jezeršek, Mojca et al. 2008. *Učni načrt za slovenščino v gimnaziji*. [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2010/programi/media/pdf/un\\_gimnazija/un\\_slovenscina\\_gimn.pdf](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2010/programi/media/pdf/un_gimnazija/un_slovenscina_gimn.pdf). Accessed 23 March 2021.
- Pucko, Tjaša and Sonja Pečjak. 2016. Primerjava učinkovitosti e-branja in branja s papirja pri učencih v srednji šoli. *Didactica Slovenica/Pedagoška obzorja* 31.3–4: 55–70.
- Rupnik Vec, Tanja and Alenka Kompare. 2006. *Kritično mišljenje v šoli*. Ljubljana: ZRSŠ.

- Saksida, Igor. 2003. Komunikacijski pouk književnosti v osnovni šoli. *Otrok in knjiga* 30.57: 5–18.
- Slovenščina (2013). Izpitna pola 1. Navodila za ocenjevanje. Microsoft Word - M132-103-1-3 (ric.si). Accessed 20 January 2021.
- Wade, Carole. 1995. Using writing to develop and assess critical thinking. *Teaching of Psychology* 22.1: 24–28.
- Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja. Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja (ZOFVI) (pisrs.si). Accessed 20 January 2021.
- Žbogar, Alenka. 2003a. Roman v gimnaziji. In *Obdobja 21, Slovenski roman*, ed. Hladnik, M., 715–24. Ljubljana: Center za slovenščino kot drugi/tuji jezik.
- . 2003b. Srednješolske književne vsebine na recepcijskem situ. *Jezik in slovstvo* 48.5: 39–50.
- . 2013. *Iz didaktike slovenščine*. LJ. SDS.
- . 2014a. Literarno branje in mladostniki. In *Obdobja 33, Recepcija slovenske književnosti*, ed. Alenka Žbogar, 551–57. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete.
- . 2014b. Temeljna didaktična načela gimnazijskega pouka književnosti. *Pedagoška obzorja/Didactica Slovenica* 29.3–4: 18–29.
- . 2015. Gimnazijski pouk književnosti v luči prenove in posodobitve. *Jezik in slovstvo* 60.3–4: 115–22.
- . 2019a. Razvijanje literarne zmožnosti. *Jezik in slovstvo* 64.1: 73–83.
- . 2019b. Slovensko ljudsko slovstvo in antična književnost pri pouku književnosti. *Jezik in slovstvo* 64.2: 31–40.

## POVZETEK

### BRANJE KNJIŽEVNOSTI V GIMNAZIJI

*Kurikularno branje literarnih del v gimnaziji stremi k doseganju ciljev pouka književnosti, zlasti k usvajanju sistemskega in sistematičnega književnega znanja, razvijanju literarne zmožnosti (prim. Žbogar, 2019), književne kulture in splošne razgledanosti. Udejanja se zlasti preko problemsko-ustvarjalnega pouka književnosti. Glede na specifične in časovne omejitve dela v šoli priporočamo, da se kombinira z metodo obrnjenega učenja, ki predvideva, da učenci doma samostojno analizirajo motivno-tematske in preprostejše jezikovno-slogovne ter idejno-sporočilne elemente literarnega besedila, zberejo enostavnejše literarnozgodovinske in -teoretske informacije, v šoli pa se posvetimo zapletenejšim jezikovnim, slogovnim, idejnim in sporočilnim prvinam, sintezi in vrednotenju prebranega ter poglobljenemu umeščanju v kontekst. Preverjanje in ocenjevanje znanja, pridobljenega preko problemsko-ustvarjalnega pouka, naj poteka v obliki formativnega spremljanja: individualizirano, pospremljeno s pravočasnimi,*

*primerno pogostimi, razumljivimi, jasnimi povratnimi informacijami, povezanimi z nameni učenja (učnimi cilji) in kriteriji odličnosti. Literarna zmožnost se v vsej svoji večplastnosti (tj. spoznavni, čustveno-motivacijski in vedenjski) razvija ob poglobljenem in dejavnem tesnem branju leposlovja. Literarna klasika, ki zajema večino obveznih besedil v gimnaziji, je mladostnikom pogosto tuja, branje naporno. Naloga snovalcev kurikulumov je, da kot obvezna predpišejo besedila, ki so prestala tudi kriterij recepcijske sprejemljivosti, naloga učiteljev pa, da učence seznanjajo z različnimi bralnimi strategijami, ki lajšajo bralni napor. Odporu do branja se lahko izognemo tudi tako, da upoštevamo načelo »manj je več«, kar ne pomeni zniževanja standardov, pač pa njihovo zviševanje: preko (meta)kognitivnega-kritičnega branja prehajamo od kvantitete k kvaliteti, tj. k poglobljenemu razvijanju višjih miselnih procesov. Posledice takega književnega pouka bodo po našem prepričanju opazne tudi v dvigu bralne pismenosti odraslih.*