

LITERATURE IN CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

Anton Pokrivčák (Ed.)

2021



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Introduction

The monograph *Literature in Contemporary Education* is part of the KEGA projects exploring the training of non-native teachers of languages and introducing digital tools to language education. In Slovakia, one part of the training consists of the courses dedicated to the literature and culture of the country whose language the student's study. In general, one can say that it is natural since literary texts offer many opportunities not only to provide students with historical facts and deepen their interpretive skills but to enrich their vocabulary with valuable, authentic language. However, the importance of the role of literature satisfactorily stressed at the higher education level via literary courses is not recognised by education documents at the national level and in the curricula at primary and secondary schools. Attending academic literary classes, many students thus tend to see them as unnecessary for their future jobs. This is one set of problems facing teacher training in foreign language departments. However, its solution depends, to a large extent, on the policymakers responsible for defining national educational criteria at various stages of education and, naturally, cannot be taken up in this publication.

What the authors have attempted to do instead is to bring attention to the second set of problems - the quality of teaching literature and culture. In the history of theoretical approaches to the study of literature, there have been, essentially, two ways of analysing or interpreting literary works - seeing literature as literature and, on the other hand, using literature as a medium for the demonstration of something else, most often various cultural, social or political phenomena. The first way of using literary texts at schools is aimed at improving learners' interpretive skills, and through that, their critical thinking, since the interpretation of a literary work requires flexible thinking and the ability to understand the tropological aspect of literary language (its metaphorical or symbolic qualities). It also stresses literature's ability to strengthen learners' creative thinking and their emotional involvement. The second method is based on extraliterary discourses, that is, it is used as a tool in various national emancipation or liberation movements, various political or ethnic (postcolonial) struggles, but also in the so-called culture wars, and so on.

Both methods have their own pros and cons, based on when and how they are used, or if they are used by a critically thinking teacher, or by a teacher "drowned" in mechanical inflexibilities.

The third, so far unmentioned, influence on the study and teaching of literature results from the digitisation of our everyday life. Our world is changing, both in its practical and theoretical manifestations. We do things differently than they were done just a few years ago, using instruments and devices which were not heard of a few years ago. The main agent of that change is the computer, a phenomenon (an instrument?) that has revolutionised not only the everyday practical life, like electricity in the past, but also affected those other areas of human endeavour traditionally standing in opposition to natural sciences and technology, the ones in which automation, the most essential imperative of computing, would be considered to go against its principal methods of expression – the humanities.

The issue of creativity and emotionality is discussed in Vitězová's chapter on creative drama. She discusses both its theoretical aspects, the history of its application in Slovakia, and various methods of the learners' immersion in the played roles. Magálová's contribution, on the other hand, explores literature from the point of view of critical thinking, teachers' roles in bringing learners to understand literature as a complex educational activity. Finally, Hriňák addresses the last of the mentioned aspects of literary education, its re-emergence via digital and multimedia discourses.

All in all, it is hoped that the publication will be useful not only for the students of foreign languages, their future teachers, but for the teachers of literature as well. Both the editor and authors believe that it will add to the contemporary discussion on the dynamic changes in education.

Editor

Creative drama as an alternative way of teaching literature

Eva Vitézová

Although the issue of reading during and outside lessons is relatively well researched and there are many publications in which it is analysed from a theoretical and empirical point of view, practical experience in primary and secondary schools proves that there are still many unfulfilled possibilities in this area. Teaching literature during lessons as well as pedagogical work outside lessons is a necessary part of education. Its aim is to motivate students to read, think and act, to lead them so that they are interested in working at school and so that reading evokes feelings of joy, excitement and satisfaction in them. This creates a positive personal relationship with the book, developing their creativity and activity. Creating an atmosphere in which every student and thought is accepted, where optimism and freedom at work prevail, contributes to this. Such an atmosphere ensures the emotional participation of students in the classroom and eliminates fear, anxiety, and unnecessary tension. Excessive demand for discipline from the teacher dampens students' activity and hampers their ability and willingness to progress in reading and thinking creatively. Memorising and strict and directive fulfilment of the curriculum ultimately lead to a reduction in the interest in reading. The current concept of education is critical of the overestimation of knowledge in a traditional school. Teaching literature and extracurricular reading must be focused on developing an interest in reading.

The current Slovak concept of teaching literature (both in teaching mother and foreign languages) mentions, above all, experiential learning and methods for the development of critical and creative thinking. In Slovakia, creative writing, dramatisation, creation of speeches based on communication situations, creation of stories and creative solutions of situations are discussed in the context of foreign language education as well (Burgerová & Cimermanová, 2013; Pokrivčáková, 2020; Straková, 2021) also mentioned. Therefore, current curricula expect and offer space in both linguistic and literary teaching for creative drama methods, but they also require a changed approach from the teacher. Exploring the communication relationships between the literary text structure and the recipient

requires thorough pre-preparation by the teacher. On the one hand, the teacher must be aware of all the possibilities considering the specific peculiarities of a particular text, on the other hand, of their methodological and appropriate use within the cognitive and emotional level of students.

The word creativity is one of the most frequented words at present. Still, at schools, the need to develop creativity is in many cases accentuated at the level of theory only, while the practical implementation shows considerable shortcomings. Otherwise, frequent reforms of school education would not be necessary. So far, it is evident (not only in Slovakia) that the percentage of the so-called encyclopaedic learners predominates at the expense of creative, personally flexible learners. Magalová et al. (2020, p. 46) pointed out the alarming results of the “non-creative” approach to teaching literature by analysing the attitudes of university students towards their primary or secondary school studies: “We considered important the data which present to what percentage university students experienced their creative potential in literary education classes during their studies at primary and secondary school. As many as 41% of PEP students admitted that they belong to the 3rd zone, i.e., to those who came across with only conservative (factual) teaching of literature without working with the text during primary and secondary schools. Slovak language students who experienced only this type of teaching accounted for 19% of respondents.” For these reasons, the path of creative drama or other alternative ways of teaching is necessary. Few teachers have chosen a less viable but more productive way to find creative alternatives to the traditional, cognitive model of verbal art education.

Each drama is a fictional model of action in real life (based on Haseman & O’Toole, 1988, p. 5). However, the term drama cannot be used here in the same sense as in England, where “drama” means primarily a method of acquiring knowledge about the world and the relationships in it or the concept of personality development. The drama is not understood in the broadest sense of the word as a dialogical written form of a theatrical model (Hořínek, 1985, p. 11), nor in the sense of a tragic or exaggerating situation or event, but as an activity in which a person decides to act and chooses the way of acting. Decision-making and choice are given by the situation from which it is necessary to look for a way out. Finding and discovering the cause - the reason (which is, in drama, usually a contradiction or conflict) and the solution method make the essence of drama. For completeness, let us add that Aristotle derived the term drama from the Greek word *drán* (in Doric, it meant to act, to do). The ancient Peloponnesians used it to describe an action and the solution of a problem. Most of the works were also called dramatic works because they depicted people acting (Aristotle, 1996, p. 62).

After a time of fluctuations in the use of terms (during the existence of federal Czechoslovakia - the terms dramatic education and creative drama were used as equivalents) in Slovakia (unlike the Czech Republic, where there are still

departments with the names of drama education), in Slovakia the term creative drama was introduced and used. In Slovakia, the name drama education was initially domesticated. Until recently, it has referred to the aesthetic and educational subject of art schools and secondary pedagogical schools or a drama circle within the framework of extracurricular teaching at primary school. In recent years, drama education has also been used for the methods of theatre (used by many teachers for at least two to three decades) in teaching several subjects. Since 1996, when a conference was held in Donovaly (under the auspices of the Banská Bystrica University and the Banská Bystrica Methodological Centre) under the title Creative Drama at School and in Extracurricular Activity, alongside the term drama education also creative drama has been in use. The term drama has also become the starting point for drama education, educational drama or creative drama. Machková, a pioneer of creative drama and children's theatre in former Czechoslovakia, considers the goals of creative drama to be pedagogical and dramatic. It is learning by experience, i.e. actions, personal, non-mediated knowledge of social relationships and events transcending the actual practice of the individuals involved. It is based on the exploration, knowledge and understanding of interpersonal relationships, the situation and the inner life of people of the present and the past, real and imaginatively created. This exploration and cognition take place in a fictional situation through role-playing and dramatic action (Machková, 1992, p. 32). According to Macková (1995, p. 6), learning through direct experience is one of the basic principles used in creative drama. An important moment is the action of individuals, which takes place in time and space. Its precondition is the creation of ideas, the stimuli of which are brought about by the course of the game itself and based on which individuals can act freely. The experience that is real during the game also depends on the depth of the idea. What an individual gains from playing through action, imagination, and impression is a new experience. The advantage of such a game over reality is:

- the ability to replay the game and try to find a better solution,
- the possibility of inducing such situations that children encounter only exceptionally or not at all (visits to other planets, a journey into the future, into the past, into an exotic environment, distant lands, etc.).

The basic building block used by creative drama is a fictitiously driven situation based on interpersonal interaction. It uses role-playing simulation games to actively get to know the world, people, society, and, of course, oneself. To summarise all previous opinions, I have borrowed an understanding of creative drama as a philosophy of life and also the concept of personality development introduced by Šimonová (1997, p. 5): the term creative drama includes in the adjective a higher degree of a person's participation in the pedagogical and artistic process, containing the signals of dramatization, with all the attributes of processuality of the phenomenon and the methods of solving or realising the

situation again towards pedagogical and artistic activities. Furthermore, under the term creative drama, Šimonová understands “a set of methods, procedures and means that can stimulate and implement:

1. creative solution of life situations,
2. creative acquisition of curriculum at school,
3. education of teachers (also managers, etc.),
4. education of the recipient of art,
5. interpretation of the work of art,
6. dramatization of the text,
7. acting, directing and dramatic training,
8. creation of the staging form,
9. creation of a work of art (literary, artistic, musical)” (1997, p. 5).

Creative drama is interdisciplinary - it is based on the knowledge, methods and goals of several disciplines. It takes over certain elements from them and creates a new, distinctive structure. The first group is represented by the dramatic arts, the second by pedagogy, the third by psychology, and the fourth by the humanities. In addition to the term drama or creative drama (in America, Canada, the Czech Republic), many other synonymous names are often used - drama in education, drama education, dramatization, structured drama, class drama, drama education. I am inclined to the conceptual definition of Šimonová, a Slovak pioneer of incorporating creative drama into the concept of teaching, and to her reservations about the use of the term drama education: “The term itself has limitations in the triple explanation of the adjective dramatic (towards theatre, towards psychology, towards the pejorative), and, at the same time, the use of the term drama education is opposed by theatregoers who understand it as a restriction of creative activity” (Šimonová, 1997, pp. 4–5). The limitation concerning the relationship to the theatre is evident; in relation to psychology, the concept of dramatization is an evocation of an emotionally graduated situation. The apparent conceptual reduction appears in didactic practice (in dialogising, improvised dramatization and role-plays).

These broad-based possibilities of influencing learners through techniques and methods of creative drama suggest new zones of creative training of learners, which can be perceived as prevention or preparation for various stressful situations produced by today’s complex way of life (attitude to drugs, multimedia “captivity” of children, aggression in school groups, etc.). This is a practical dimension of the use of creative drama (con-situation of a literary character with possible life roles of learners). Creative drama can bring learners a high degree of personality gains, especially with the possibilities of developing independence, fluency, flexibility, originality, verbal and nonverbal (e.g. physical, artistic) activity. It is also essential to educate learners as creative artistic managers (learners in the role of director, screenwriter, set designer), which is a relatively new and

challenging task at schools. Its positives include: the training of imagination, deepening of sociability and assertiveness of learners, the need of role empathising of school communicants in interactive relationships, etc.

The methodology of creative drama also makes it possible to apply the intensive model of interpretation of a work of art, which can be more open to the recipient through multiple creative “playbacks”, thus deepening his/her understanding and comprehension of the text (its semantic and semiotic interpretation). This has a decisive influence on the receptionist attitude of students in terms of the acceptance of a literary text’s quality or its argumentative rejection. Beláková claims that “... communication skills are a prerequisite not only for mastering prescribed curriculum but also for later successful application in life. They have a lifelong validity and can be constantly improved” (Beláková, 2017, p. 58). Immersion in various creative roles also brings students the problem of mental coping or “adjusting” to the playing of a role. It must be said that not every role is equally pleasant for learners. The degree of acceptability of a role depends on a learner’s nature (whether the nature of the literary character coincides with the learner’s nature or not - empathy or alienation in relation to the role played), but also on his/her other dispositions (psychological, emotional, communicative, motional, and so on). Incongruence of a learner with a represented role, which is imposed on him/her by a pedagogically incompetent teacher in creative drama, can cause negative mental states. Poliach and Kariková (Šimonová, 1997, p. 11) talk in this respect about several possible psychotoxic effects of dramatization techniques:

1. consequences in the field of emotionality (regret, defiance, shame, fixation of social fear),
2. consolidation of wrong attitudes (confirmation of my own incompetence, confirmation of a negative image of the teacher, consolidation of attitude negativity towards classmates, consolidation of the belief of the type “I will never play again”),
3. consequences in the field of relationships (loss of friends in class due to failure, spreading gossip, loss of confidence in the teacher who exposed the learner to a traumatic situation),
4. psychosomatic problems (seizures, headaches),
5. worsening of neurotic disorders (tics, sleep disorders, depression).

A teacher who is amateur in the field of creative drama may feel that the methods and techniques of creative drama are risk-free, because frequent “odes” to creative methods give the impression that their application can only be positive. “In any case, it turns out that lifeless literature lessons to a large extent negatively affect readers not only during education, but also have a bad effect on their further reading development” (Magalová et al., p. 44). However, a qualified teacher must

know the risks of stepping on the “thin ice,” especially in the case of experimenting with emotionally demanding methods associated with literary demonstrations, which depict psychologically very demanding types of characters. The creative and psychological immersion of a young learner into an older, intellectually and mentally complex character, in an even more complex historical time, is extremely difficult and represents a stressful situation (a mentally exhaustive condition). The opposite reaction (with a non-empathic type of behaviour) is also possible. It is evoked by an inadequate (carefree) relationship to the presented role, which instead of feelings of tragedy brings to the surface the tragicomic reaction of the actor and the audience. It is the duty of the teacher to definitely consider the appropriateness of the selection of samples with the intention of testing them using methods and techniques of creative drama. In addition to psychic negativism, one can identify, in learners, inappropriate teacher behaviour (during the application of dramatization methods and techniques), which definitely demotivates them:

1. forcing a learner to play a role (manipulative coercion),
2. inappropriate teacher remarks,
3. non-discretion of the teacher,
4. excessive desire for experimentation by the teacher (endangering learners by teacher’s personal ambitions),
5. demonstration of the teacher’s own perfect abilities, which slows down the performance of learners,
6. unconscious “square accounts” (e.g. when a teacher invites an unsympathetic learner to play embarrassing role),
7. double role (some learners are not satisfied with playing a nice role when the teacher has previously given them a bad mark - the relationship barriers between teacher and learner, the transformation of the learner).

Despite the fact that I tried to draw attention to the other side of the coin called creative drama, its positive (and therapeutic) effects cannot be ignored: self-expression, social feedback, information about alternative behaviours, corrective emotional experience, emotional break - catharsis and others. Drama therapy is extremely effective in the work with physically and mentally handicapped children and adult clients. Majzlánová (2004), Žilková (2001), Magalová (2013) in Slovakia and Valenta (2001), Machková (1980, 1999) in the Czech Republic pay attention to this issue. The Czech Republic also publishes a valuable magazine *Tvořivá dramatika*, which brings theoretical impulses and practical ideas for creative work with learners of various ages (issues of school drama and theatre in education, methodology of theatrical work with children, structured drama technologies, etc.). In Slovakia, Šimonová, an influential expert, literary theorist and artist, methodologist of literature for children and youth, contributed to the dynamism

of processes in creative drama. In 2013, 2014, 2015, the University of Prešov organised online conferences entitled Creativity at School - School of Creativity. Its proceedings offer interesting material on the issue. Much work in creative drama is done by Bibiana (International House of Arts for Children), a cultural institution with international operations. Bibiana was founded in 1987 as a partner of a world-famous event with a long tradition, the Bratislava Biennial of Illustration. Initially, it specialised as a gallery establishment that supported the development of illustration books for children and the improvement of children's literature at home and abroad. Later, the possibilities for the development and dissemination of children's art in a wide range of types and genres began to expand, and now it is involved in theatre performances, methodological activities, interactive exhibitions and so on, even communicating very intensively online with children and adults during the pandemic. A human being has been a playful creature since childhood, and playfulness as a symptom of creativity, should not be lost even in old age. Magalová claims that "In primary education, the use of elements of drama (education with dramatic arts, involvement in dramatic units) is a necessity, because for a child aged 6-10 years, play (imagining being someone else) is a typical and natural activity. Let me repeat that creative drama uses the method of role-playing, which presupposes the child's imagining being in certain situations and their subsequent solving. Role playing can be: full or partial. Partial may be based on expression through movement or expression through speech or sound. Theatre arose from a person's ability to play and imitate: learners imitate more or less fictional characters in their behaviour and actions, and to varying degrees of authenticity they also realise themselves" (2013, without numbering). Creative people can be said to carry a symbiosis of playfulness and discipline, because without the interplay of these two components, real results in this area could not be created. Zelina (2006, p. 20) presents 10 features of a creative personality:

1. Creative people are full of physical and mental energy, but they are often also weak, quiet, peaceful and in seclusion.
2. Creative people are smart, capable, intelligent, but also naive and childish at the same time.
3. Creative people combine playfulness and discipline, responsibility and irresponsibility.
4. Creative people alternate between imagination, fantasy and rootedness in meaningful reality.
5. Creative people tend to extraversion and introversion.
6. Creative people are humble, shy and proud and at the same time.
7. Creative people run away from rigidity, stereotype, fight obstacles to creativity, but, at the same time, they are obedient and supple.
8. Creative people are both rebels and conservatives.

9. Creative people are passionate about their work, but they can still be extremely objective.

10. Creative people are open, sensitive, more often exposed to suffering and pain, and yet, or precisely because of this, creative work provides them with a lot of joy, pleasure and happiness and becomes the meaning of their lives.

It follows from the indicated characteristics of creative people that they are not personally distinct types, because every distinctiveness is one-sided. As creative personalities are characterised by a high degree of dissatisfaction with the rigidity and desire for new solutions, their natural feature is the attentive perception (mindfulness, focalisation - attention to detail and the whole) of gaps in the life of school and society, and originality of thinking. A sense of humour and self-irony is often an accompanying feature of the "creatives". This is also extremely important for a teacher who can "open" his/her mentees in this way and stimulate them to creative performance. It is interesting how contrasting, even paradoxical, or fluctuating, the characteristics of the creative personality appear. And it is precisely in the contradictions, in the personality change (flexibility) that hides the core of the creative processes of fluence (many ideas of a creative person), flexibility (diversity of ideas) and originality (uniqueness of ideas).

Recently, interest in TIE (Theatre in Education), which originated in England in the 1960s and was enforcing the idea that the theatre should meet educational needs, has also come to the fore in Slovakia. In addition to aesthetic function, the theatre definitely fulfils its formative function as well, by "situating" the learners into spectators who sometimes have an opportunity to participate in a play, with the possibility to use:

1. theatre-forum in which the play is played twice, but when it is repeated, the spectators stop it and "take over" from the actor (at least for a while) a certain role and initiate an alternative solution to the situation with their player inputs,

2. group work in which each group works with a teacher-actor; on the basis of this work, short performances are created from mini-discussions and improvisations based on the theme and story of the play.

The theatre-forum is a type of interactive, participatory theatre that draws learners into performances with current educational problems (drugs, crime, etc.) and allows them to communicate openly about the burning issues of the present, because in these hectic times they may even affect them personally. At the same time, learners can cultivate their communicative skills, abilities to perform in public or expand their knowledge of the processes of theatrical production, in order to gain experience based on participation in the play and the possibility of creating certain evaluative attitudes to the topic. When working with a prosaic reading segment, learners get acquainted with a certain artistic micro-story. If the teacher wants learners to be active and creative, they can use the literary story as

a basic aesthetic stimulus that inspires them to construct their own story, or to collective linguistic-aesthetic modelling of a serial story (language expression, compositional creativity, communication creativity). The collective story is usually stylistically heterogeneous, “rough” because it is created by individuals with different stylistic dispositions, unlike the solo story, which is mostly stylistically homogeneous. Vráblová (2006, p. 85), a teacher of creative writing, offers interesting suggestions for collective modelling of the story. The generation of the story is set among the song divisions, which leads to the use of interdisciplinary relationships with music education and may also be supplemented with artistic expression. Creating micro- or macro-stories is the most natural training for creativity. For several decades, the departments of storytelling have been very successful at American universities, i.e. the departments that deal with the poetics of creation and the practical aesthetics of storytelling. The story and construction of its aesthetically effective composition is at the same time an excellent rhetorical or linguistic-communication preparation for coping with various life situations. In my opinion (drawing on my practical experience with learners of university and other school levels), an excellent “tool” for chiselling the virtuosity of storytelling is a change in the optics of storytelling, e.g. variation of different types of narrator: children’s narrator, male narrator in various roles (role of father, grandfather, witness of the event, etc.), female narrator in the role of a village gossip, mother, or poet who poeticises the story, etc. The multi-optics of the narration allows for creative variation of the same story, which is the basis for developing a creative individual style.

However, when working with a literary (epic) model, certain setbacks and ambiguities may arise, resulting from the fact that the author obscures something in the text. Ulrychová, an excellent Czech expert on creative drama, draws attention to these entropic (indeterminate) places in the text and calls them gaps in narrative fiction: “The most typical gap is the hermeneutic gap (also called information gap). The hermeneutic aspect of reading consists in uncovering a mystery (gap), finding clues, forming hypotheses, trying to decide between several hypotheses and constructing one final hypothesis” (Ulrychová, 2005, p. 10). Gaps can be permanent or temporary, permanent being the ones that remain open after the end of the text. Gaps in the text serve as an escalation of readers’ interest and curiosity, and so, according to Ulrychová, they can provoke their creativity and imagination and lead to the formulation of questions that in turn lead to the depth of the text, and to the filling of gaps. Gaps are a certain “zone” for the development of creative work, e.g. with literary characters. Ulrychová presents several ideas for creative work with literary characters:

1. The teacher can change the characteristics of the characters. I personally tried the dialogue of two fairy tale characters with learners in literature methodology classes and with primary school learners, e.g. the proud princess of

the fairy tale of the same name turned into a modest girl and Cinderella turned into a proud, emancipated girl. The dialogue of these metamorphosed fairy tale characters was based on a contrasting characteristic, i.e. on narcissism, contempt for others and the pride of Cinderella on the one hand, and on the altruism and modesty of a formerly proud princess on the other. Contrasting role stimulates learners to self-reflection and the need for self-exchange, self-creation (self-improvement).

2. The teacher can also choose a marginal (episodic) character as the central character. This metamorphosis of the character requires learners to creatively complete the episodic character, which sometimes results in a change of theme, and so the story begins to take on a new meaning and new dimensions. In my opinion, the creativity of transforming an episodic character into a main character lies in the learner's ability to plot the story in an interesting way by creating replicas for a metamorphosed character and in a functional reduction of replicas and events related to the former main character. These character modalities will show the level of creativity and flexibility of the learner.

3. A new character can be added to the story. This is a procedure for which we have the term amplification (Panovová), i.e. extension of the original text with a new element in the text structure (addition of several fictional characters, motifs, a new environment, etc.). The new character is a test for the learners in a given role of the degree of their imagination and imagination. Experiments with characters should be a challenge for learners to develop creativity.

According to Ulrychová (2005, pp. 10–12), experimentation with time and space is also stimulating. Players in the story can collectively agree on whether the story will take place now or in the future. According to her, the selection of potential problem situations and their description is also important in order to optimise the work. From the potential problem situations, the teacher and the players choose one key (problem) situation that best suits the learning and formative goals for the group. If the teacher is working with a story familiar to the whole group, it is important that he/she "illuminates" the problem situation from a new perspective and thus updates it. In this way, it will open up the possibility for players to take a creative (non-traditional) approach to a traditional story (e.g. Red Riding Hood on holiday in Egypt, while the narrator of the story can be a child detective). The construction of the drama presupposes the starting point, i.e. an activity that draws the group into action. The teacher collects information (clues in the text), then specifically formulates what the individual steps will look like, both in terms of content and form. The next step is (from the position of a teacher) specifying the shape of the problem situation, i.e. how it will be established, how the roles will be divided, what techniques will be used and whether the situation will be implemented continuously or discontinuously. This is how the drama scenario is created. The teacher also deals with the consequences of decisions that

can be made in a problem situation and whether this will not open a new problem situation. If it does, the teacher will indicate what needs to be done to make it happen. To enhance the effect of the drama, the teacher strives to create and maintain tension and to use contrast. Finally, the teacher prepares basic questions that will help him/her to stimulate learner reflection (the phase of developing creative evaluative thinking). This is, as the Czech theorist and practitioner in the field of creative drama Ulrychová claims, what staging looks like, i.e., “stepping” the work with a literary masterpiece. Working with a character can also be done by writing (vertically) his/her first name, or surname, in the form of an acrostic, and adding to each letter the characteristics of the character in the form of adjectives.

A literary character can be “illuminated” from different angles, based on the theme of the story and the degree of imagination of the learners. A literary character can be presented in an unconventional way, in the form of self-advertising. If learners work in groups, paired advertisements can be created, i.e. one learner prepares a positive advertising poster for the other, or an anti-advertisement (parody of the character). My experience with such a form of characteristics or auto-characteristics of a literary character is a proof that the critical attitude of learners to a literary character leads to the “production” of humour and satire, which signals a creative approach to the problem. Dialogue with a literary character represents an interesting method of communication and can take various creative forms. Either it is about: 1. dialogue of the reader with the literary character (the reader can admire the character, condemn it, or propose his/her own solutions to the situations the character went through); 2. a dialogue between two literary characters from one work or from two works; 3. the dialogue of the characters taking place between the characters who find themselves in a completely new environment; an organic part of the dialogues is also the comic effect or the comic of nonsense).

Hník argues that “Play (in the sense of playful interpretation) must be attractive, attractive, but at the same time it must maintain the literary goal, moreover, in our case, connected with interpretation. Therefore, it must be clearly defined by boundaries so that it does not turn into a non-literary or even self-serving game. It should lead to an understanding of the literary work from within, therefore it should offer input into the text, e.g. entry into the role, but also entry into the text in the sense of one’s own work” (2014, p. 71). Machková, a pioneer of creative drama and children’s theatre in the former Czechoslovakia, considers the goals of creative drama to be pedagogical and means dramatic. It is learning by experience, i.e., actions, personal, non-mediated knowledge of social relationships and events, exceeding the current real practice of the individual involved. What an individual gains from a game based on action, idea, and experience, is a new experience. According to Macková, the advantage of such a game over reality is

- the ability to replay the game and try to find a better solution,
- the possibility to induce such situations that children encounter only exceptionally or not at all (visits to other planets, a journey into the future, into the past, into an exotic environment, distant lands, etc.).

The basic building block used by creative drama is a fictitious situation based on interpersonal interaction using simulation role-playing games to actively get to know the world, man, society and, of course, oneself. Literature has a number of fictional stories, so it seems natural that this method will be used in literary teaching.

Since creative writing also includes creative writing, it is necessary to pay great attention to it in verbal art lessons. The writer Daniel Hevier - co-organiser of symposia and creative writing courses for teachers and learners - wrote the following about his understanding of creativity (Hevier, 2006, 86): "For me, creativity is the ability to think and act innovatively, desire not to be a passive link in the movement around us, a chemical mixture of intuition, curiosity, dynamism and restlessness ... Creative training should have the ambition to abolish our inner blocks and thought fossils, dissolve addictive and routine reactions, turn upside down what was organised in conventionalised order, to let drafts into thought stereotypes ..." This aesthetically effective definition of creativity should be a challenge for teachers to eliminate the deficits that have accumulated over the years also in aesthetic subjects, and to embark on the path of substantial change.

There is no need to convince creative teachers about the positives of creative writing, because they are the ones who know that the creative style is the gateway to the personal development of the learner. Anyone who wants to write creatively knows that they have to read a lot in the first place, or, simply put, they should understand that without reading there is no creative writing. Therefore, it is commendable that at present, the lead in efforts to promote and apply creative writing at schools and to revitalize reading in various spaces (e.g. at the TESCO's in Bratislava and elsewhere), was taken by our most productive master of the word, a "modern Matej Hrebenda" (Hrebenda was a blind Slovak bookseller and distributor of Slovak and Czech books, in the 19th century, during the national revival, who travelled through villages and towns and spread enlightenment), the writer Daniel Hevier. The issue of creative writing is also discussed by Beláková who claims that "the method of creative writing is not understood only as the very act of writing, creation, but it is preceded by a wide range of activities related to reading, interpretation of the read text, and an entire scale of aesthetic and educational tasks. The ideas and activities that enable learners to acquire the skills necessary for their own text creation help them to understand the author's world and the objective world (the world of reality)" (Beláková, 2018, p. 55). The gradual implementation of creative writing in the teaching of language and literature (in

the new educational concept) will certainly lead to the development of learners' skills to verticalise not only the knowledge of others, but also self-knowledge. Creative writing is the best way to develop emotional and critical intelligence and creative thinking, which is naturally reflected in the unique and creative category, and that is the cultivated style of man. The category of a literary character is also very inviting for the application of creative writing (a fictional letter to a literary character, which includes role positions in writing fictitious letters, representing a higher degree of difficulty in drafting the text, and, at the same time, "other" type of optics). In creative writing, it is about learners being able to develop their imagination, their stylistic, story-telling and transformational skills. Creative writing is an example of their creative work with various elements in the structure of artistic text. The works written creatively by learners in the role of futurists or fortune tellers are also suitable for the development of learners' imagination. Fictitious letters as concretisations of creative writing are, based on my experience with elementary school learners, an excellent test of learners' ability to make up stories (seen as a creative process). Fictional letters can also be written by literary characters to their readers, complaining, for example, about the cruelty of their fate. Creative writing can be based on time jumps, or on analogies between the fates of characters in the past and present. Fictional letters can be written by learners in the role of literary characters, either to each other or the character writes to the author, because he is not satisfied with his literary destiny or characteristics. The character can write a letter to the author to turn her negative role into a positive one, stating the reasons for his request. Another variant of creative writing, which I tried with high school learners, was writing critical letters from authors of various works. Learners in the role of authors wrote critical letters about the mutual shortcomings in the works, about what hinders each other in their poetics of creation. In this way, we can lead learners to a critical reception of artistic texts and to evaluative thinking, i.e. to the development of critical intelligence (correct stylisation and objective evaluation of literary works), because the critical aspect appears only exceptionally at current school. The study of authorial poetics in this form is a way to the qualitative differentiation of works from the axiological and aesthetic aspects. Fictional letters can be written by readers to authors and give them ideas for the improvement of the author's strategy in their works. Learners have the opportunity to take on the difficult position of the creators of works.

The professionalism of teachers in creative drama can be productively used in the educational process in the complex development of the learner's personality. Through literary texts as well as methods and techniques of creative drama, teachers have a chance not only to influence the mind, but also the feeling and will of learners. Literature is a complex art and its impact on the axiological dimension of people is irreplaceable. Creative drama applied by a professional teacher

(skilled in the subject) brings what current schools need most: creativity, communicativeness, empathy, sociability, development of imaginativeness, a high degree of motivation and personal axiologization of learners and teachers. Machková (2000) considers the most important areas that creative drama serves the area of social development of a person, his/her individual development, and the area of a person's aesthetic development. The basic methods of creative drama include mimetic games, which work on the principle of imitation, transformation, including role-playing and playing in a situation. According to the way or depth of transformation of the participant of the game to another reality, she distinguishes three levels of transformation: when a player acts in the game for himself in a certain life task, but reacts within a fictitious situation, i.e. how I would act if I ..., it is the simulation. The alteration plane is a type of role-playing in which a player takes on a different role, no longer I as if, but me, when AS a player I play someone else. At this level, the ability to be aware of various social roles and the skill to work with them is developed. This level is ideal in teaching literature when learners enter different characters and act on their behalf. The level of characterisation goes deeper into the inner motivations and differences of the character's attitudes, examines and creates his/her inner life.

It is not yet possible to use this level in the methodology of working with text. However, the role play is not the only one that helps the process of creative drama. Since the basis of the communication code, i.e., the key "material" on which the learning process is based, is the human world, its material and spiritual form, it also affects the division of methods according to several criteria. If the role play has a starting point, we are talking about methods based on the principle of role-playing, without which the process of creative drama cannot take place. This group includes methods based on full role-playing, as well as methods based on fragmentary role-playing (movement or speech or sound only). The second group consists of methods that are not based on the principle of role-playing, but organise or support it. These are general methods of teaching and education that dominate in literary teaching - dialogue, discussion, interpretation of a literary text, methods specific to other subjects, e.g. creative writing, drawing, technical exercises of theatrical-dramatic skills. However, these methods can also work in a role-playing game. The third group are complementary methods, which can complement role-playing e.g. observing, listening, touching, smelling. The fourth group consists of auxiliary and complementary methods, which are not based on the principle of role-playing, are not necessary for creative drama, but can be helpful. They include various games - didactic, warm-up, relaxing, fun games A detailed division of methods can be found in the publications of Valenta or Pršová.

From all of them, I select those that creative drama uses to support role-playing, and we will no longer do without most of them in literary teaching. Creative drama helps literature with its methodology. The following division of methods by Valent,

which covers three areas - the basic, supporting a meaningful course, and the expanding area - is clear and very useful for the teacher: the full play method (which is mostly used only in creative drama, in literature it is part of the method of acting out and is not dominant); pantomime-movement methods (they are about connecting movement and feelings and events, in literature it is non-verbal communication); verbal-sound methods (using sounds and speech, in literary education they are dominant, in creative drama they fulfil goals aimed at mastering quality listening, good speech technique, working with paralinguistic means or sound); graphic-writing methods (they are based on the fact that the learner creates a certain written, drawn or painted artefact, therefore they are often the focus in the development of literary competence); material methods form an expanding area.

A partial pantomime is also useful for the teaching of literature, its essence being in the partial involvement of the body in the movement, which means that only some parts of the body are in motion. Sometimes it is just an expression of attitude, emotional tension, mood (for example, showing how the trees move under the influence of the wind, indicating fear to the body, showing with hands that there is a church, pharmacy, shop in the city). Touch game, touch pantomime is based on the transmission of signals by touch. It develops mainly sensory perception, imagination, and can be used as a training activity (learning about the environment - description of the environment, description of a classmate's face), in building trust as well as in a role frame as one of the techniques (for example, choosing one of classmates standing in a circle, using hands to map his/her hair, face, hands, then finding the in a group with eyes closed). Narrative pantomime is an activity during which the teacher tells or reads a story and the learners simultaneously perform the activities they are talking about. It is important that the story contains many actions suitable for pantomime performance. Narrative pantomime is often helpful in practicing reproduction. The pantomimization of space, environment and things has the task of depicting, portraying a specific environment through pantomime. The setting is built on the basis of what attitude the learner creates towards it and through what body movements learners define the space and objects in it (e.g. expression of huge space, confined space, royal court, expression of relationship to others ...). The aim is to develop imagination, activate life experience, experience with the relationship of things and space and with their arrangement, nonverbal communication. This technique induces the activity of learners, e.g. when getting oriented in space, when they have to capture the most characteristic features of the environment in which they live: my home, the place where I live, but also the people I meet.

The characters can be given a command to stop and then revived by touch, while learners demonstrate their activity, and whoever the teacher touches will talk. Vivid - still images, photographs or even sculptures are well-known and often

used techniques in literature teaching. Certain phenomena, persons or situations, are depicted by one or more learners without words and without movements, silently, with body configuration and a stable facial expression. A live image can take several forms, an image without transformation, where there is only one version capturing one moment, or an image with transformation - a sequence of live images when the image is silently transformed into another image without interruption at one point. In the case of images depicting a story, it is important to decide which moment deserves to perpetuate with its meaning. Images, or photographs, can be used in the practice of creating a text outline. A variant of the method is ten-second live images. The learner tells or writes the name of an object to the learners in the groups and a group of learners (or several groups simultaneously) creates the object from their bodies until the teacher counts to ten. Sometimes learners can talk about their work, at other times it is a pantomime activity. Display modes are compared. Learners are often surprised by how quickly they can create objects when there is no time for discussion. The images in the motivational part evoke the curriculum, evoke the theme and in the final part they reflect the curriculum. This method also occurs in several didactic transformations, it is easy to use and effective.

Verbal and nonverbal communication, the use of speech in various situations, are also opportunities for creative drama. Dialogic methods occupy a basic position in creative drama, because dialogue is the basis of dramatic action. The most commonly used are reading, brainstorming, discussion, dispute, quarrel, conversation, meeting, etc. These methods are usually part of most methodologies, so they are listed most often.

Creative drama also includes reading - especially through its relation to literature, although not only to it. We can use it as loud or quiet reading. Another use of reading is when the learner only plays the reading, so it is in fact a game of reading, or the learner-player is actually reading, either in roles or out of roles. However, one can also read what was created in the role play (letters, reports, diaries) or anything that the learners did not create (books, newspapers, other documents). Dialogic reading is performed on the basis of pre-divided tasks. Learners read replicas of the characters they represent, intermediate text, or the notes in a dramatic text read by the learner-narrator. Role reading with the emphasis on the nature of the character should capture the dynamics and intonation of the voice with tasks for learners (e.g. reading the text as a market vendor, as a mother telling a good night story, as a train announcer, as a witch when conjuring with something...). Role reading with an emphasis on capturing the atmosphere is the reading with an emotional charge capturing the mood (e.g. reading the text with great fear - imagining that a huge storm is falling on the learner, someone is chasing him/her ..., reading the text as if the learner were winning a large sum of money, as if something was very surprising at the moment,

as if someone were angry with him/her, as if the learner were very much looking forward to something). Talking through a substitutive text can be done using a familiar text, a rhyme, a proverb, a saying, or a nonsensical sentence, or a tongue twister acting as such a text, allowing the learners express the situation in which they find themselves. Alternatively, some learners prepare a dialogue through a substitutive text and others guess what they have been talking about. A hot chair is a technique based on conversation, specifically the confession of a certain character. The defining element here is the question and the whole activity is a variant of the question-answer method. The technique is used in the context of role-playing, i.e. inside a game. Learners ask questions as characters in roles or on their own behalf, on the level of alteration and simulation, according to the specific conditions of content processing. Usually a group of learners ask an individual or a smaller group of learners. The term "hot" suggests that the confession in this case will be associated with a problem that affects the character personally. A hot chair can have its specific variants, such as interrogation, bankruptcy, etc.

Of great use are also graphic-writing methods, e.g. writing letters, drawing maps, etc.) However, a literary text can also be created (creative writing) outside the role as a basis for later dramatization (e.g. writing excerpts from "novels"), as well as, indeed, a text with artistic elements, such as a poem about a poem, telling stories from the life of a character that adheres to the style of the text. Creative writing has been discussed by Klimovič (2009, 2010). These techniques are, again, often used in literary teaching in addition to reading. Writing techniques can also be helpful in recognising the nature of the characters or in creating an atmosphere in the poem. Diaries are a suitable form for writing in creative drama. It is writing for oneself, it has a chronological structure, and in addition to the descriptive stylistic procedure, a reflection procedure is applied. It helps to discover types, on the way to characterisation, to discover private worlds and that what others do not know. The diary can be used to discover the character, the empty space in the story is supplemented by the learner's idea (in the context of the presented story) about the character. Letters can be addressed to someone, "someone" writes them, they are a means of interpersonal communication from the intimate level to the highly official level. Learning to write letters in the lesson is a contextual learning for learners, the letter is integrated into the system of relationships in the game and its writing as a set of skills can be facilitated by these circumstances. The use of writing letters or letters as artefacts can be very diverse, depending on the "processing" of the topic, age and abilities of the learners. The letter can be a starting point for creating a story, through the letter it is possible to model the character of the story, the environment in which she lived, even from the written sentences and something from her past life. On the basis of the excerpts from the letter, it is possible to deduce with the children what could have been its content,

what could have caused the reader to tear the letter, not write it, and then to finish it with the children. The letter can also be written in a role, and the teacher does not have to organise the whole lesson as a drama. A letter from a diary, or a diary (a fictional one that plays an important role in a story), or even a letter from a literary text or an excerpt in this function are used to inform about the characters in any task. The leaves can fundamentally change the angle of view of the character or, in terms of the construction of the text (dramas), they are central - meaning-creating, and direct the next story.

Photography (film) as an artefact (can also be photographed in class) can be used to initiate drama, situations, games about the characters in it. In photographs, we may be interested in the time in which the photo was taken, the clothes, the status of the photos taken, the motivation of the photo shoot and then, for example, the story segment that the photo captures. The most suitable component is style, but one can work with photographs as well. Maps - plans as artefacts, but also drawing maps or drawing up plans is an excellent individual and joint activity that helps build game contexts, circumstances and environments where the curriculum is framed by the need to know the region. In addition to geography, this method can also be used in the field of regional legends or biographies of authors, or to capture information from travelogues. When drawing maps similar to cartographic maps, it is a matter of developing specific abilities, but it is possible to create image maps or maps of a different kind. The map can also be used in the game as a finished artefact. Other methods have a similar use (I mean those that are activities, i.e. they are created directly in the process or activate the activity) such as paintings, posters, projects, advertisements, leaflets, scenarios, reports, CVs and others. Several of them, e.g. posters, leaflets, reports or CVs are used in composition and literature lessons.

Working with objects or buildings (it can also be a learning outside the classroom, e.g. in a museum, at ruins, in nature) is a joyful variety of literature lessons, as well as working with costumes (stylised, surrogate, real, motivational) and props (surrogate or symbolic, when the tie represents a man, heels a woman, a doll a child) acting directly in the story or as a motivation (for example, as a character's memories in the form of things). Interesting possibilities are also offered by the combination of creative drama and project teaching, which is still relatively little used in our schools. Creative drama helps children discover and get to know the world around them as well as themselves. The main tool of drama education is dramatic play. It creates fictional situations - like from real life - and solving them in the game allows children to get to know themselves and define relationships with others. Playfulness is the most basic quality of children. Playing together with learning and work is a basic form of human activity. It develops human functions, manifesting the active relationship of the subject to the environment. Its important place in the life of a child (and a person in general)

stems from the fact that, from the point of view of ontogenesis, it is the first form of activity. It precedes learning, in it and through it the child learns involuntarily. Dramatic games can be characterised as creative games with rules. Properly applied and understood drama education is a useful helper for teachers and educators. Its biggest advantage is that we can apply and use it in various activities and at every stage of our impact on the child. With its help we can calm or activate children, it brings to literary education the values of para-artistic activities. Through play and entertainment, we can awaken their interest in verbal art. Obert (1993, p. 29) sees the use of drama education in working with children on three levels: a) role play, b) dramatic improvisation (dramatization), c) use of dramatic games and exercises. He considers role-playing to be the most optimal technique for the reception of literary texts. It consists in empathising with a character without reproducing him/her in the author's understanding. Even when applying this technique, the teacher must have a clearly thought-out goal. Entering a role of a certain type is suggested by him, and he can refer to three levels of meaning of the facts played: to the level that results from a particular role, to the level that illustrates well-known situations, and to the level that focuses on personal feelings and knowledge on a given topic. Dramatic improvisation is more strongly based on a literary work. It does not equal the dialogising of the text. If we want children to take on roles while working with the text, the dramatization should be based on free improvisation. It is actually a matter of transforming verbal signs into action and visual signs. It differs from spontaneous children's play in that it is didactically controlled. For children, play is the most natural activity, an integral part of their world, a necessity of life that distinguishes them from the adult world and at the same time connects them with it. It is the best and most important educational tool. The game brings joy, fun, through it children acquire and improve skills, practice memory, cultivate thinking. The game is therefore not only fun, but also a source of education and acquisition of new knowledge. During the game, children come into contact with other children, gain the first social experience, learn to cooperate, follow the rules, perform tasks, enforce their will as well as submit to others.

We can use drama education most significantly in fairy tales. The fairy tale is the genre that is close to every child. Children listen to fairy tales, make them up or even retell them. Working with fairy tales also has a great benefit in the field of education: it consciously develops empathic ability, teaches to distinguish good from evil, develops imagination. Like most epic works, they contain a story, and many interesting contrasting characters who solve problems get into interesting situations. All this is actually the goal of literary education. Folk tales are characterised above all by magic and fantasy. They are based on a fictional story and are not tied to a specific space and time. Their specific features include the following:

- in the centre there is a protagonist who, in order to achieve his/her goal, must overcome obstacles;
- there appear persons, creatures, objects with supernatural properties (forces);
- characters can be clearly divided into positive and negative;
- their compositions are closed, characterised by stability;
- they represent folk symbolism and elements from mythology;
- they contain set phrases at the beginning (once upon a time ...) and also at the end (they lived happily ever after ...).

All these elements are close and sympathetic to the child recipient, whether they are characters, the closure of the story, the fight between good and evil, the victory of positive characters. According to Obert (1998, p. 84), in the literary-didactic context, the dramatic method most often appears in two forms; as a didactic method (then it works in direct connection with the educational program) or as an independent psycho-pedagogical method of personality development (not only of the child). Drama is often semantically associated with dramatic games, entertainment. Dramatic forms of activity are thus perceived as entertaining activities, the basis of which is spontaneity, imagination, and play. In dramatic activities, however, it is necessary to follow the established rules, which are known to both teachers and learners. Drama as a didactic category uses all the natural dispositions and knowledge of the child and is a comprehensive combination of spontaneous and directed activities. Its essence lies in creating situations in which learners have the opportunity to identify with other people and things, play the role of a certain character and empathise with the position (being, existence) of someone else. In literature lessons, learners do not memorise texts, but improvise according to the syllabus of literary texts. In connection with the distinction between drama and theatre (theatrical expression), theorists claim that theatre is a form of communication between the actor and the spectator, and drama serves for the benefit of experience and for the internal enrichment of participants. In addition, the theatre requires individual mastery of several selected individuals, and the playwright provides space for all involved. In the teaching of literature, we consider the most optimal technique to be "role-playing", which consists in empathising with the character without reproducing it in the author's sense.

School plays were already very popular in the Middle Ages. Comenius emphasised their importance in his works and wrote two school plays himself. Through theatrical practice of teaching material, he made the work of learners more pleasant and aroused activity in them. He wrote of his experience as follows (1959, p. 22): "... human life must be lived by conversations and deeds; and so young people in this way, in a short way and pleasantly, are led by examples and imitations to get used to observing the diversity of things, answer various questions without preparation, move decently, control the natural face, hands and

whole body, alternate and change voice, that is, to play honestly any role and at the same time get rid of children's shyness and act casually." He dealt with the issue of the *Gate to Languages* in eight games, which together form the work *School by Play*. From the point of view of today's understanding of drama education, the content of individual games is also interesting. He deals with nature, man, family life, etc. At present, what Comenius attributed to school plays applies to drama education. The following example of project teaching is a project with a possible implementation in the fifth year of primary school (within the lessons of Slovak language and literature, or in extracurricular time and space). The name of the project is Salt Over Gold and the relevant educational area is Language and Communication; the competencies it develops are as follows: personal, social and civic competences as well as ability to solve problems and social and personnel skills. From the aspect of the goal, it will be a problem-based project, as for the number of researchers a group project, according to its length a short-term project organizationally implemented within one subject - one class - one teacher. Its output will be the dramatization of the fairy tale intended for four teaching units (blocks). Naturally, the teacher can vary the length and content of the project. Some of the blocks can be implemented separately. Except for the first block, which includes acquainting learners with the text of the fairy tale, all other blocks assume its preliminary knowledge. The first unit lasts two classic lessons (90 minutes), because it includes reading (hearing) the fairy tale Salt Over Gold. We will work with the electronic version of the text (Dobšinský, online).

1st block

In the introductory part of the first unit, the teacher explains to the learners that the subject of their joint activity in this project will be working with the fairy tale Salt Over Gold. An introductory game with rules, which we call the King has destroyed nerves, is included to warm up and introduce the topic. The teacher explains to the learners the rules of the game: The king has destroyed nerves. The courts and the ladies of the court are therefore very calm, they are silent in his presence so as not to disturb him. They sit in their place and perform some quiet activity (playing chess, reading, embroidering ...). The king (one of the learners) stands in the middle of the room, and when he applauds and shouts, "The king is not at home," everyone jumps up, running here and there, noisy - until the king applauds again and shouts, "The king is at home again." At that moment, everyone must calm down and engage in peaceful activity. The teacher sits in a circle with the learners. He asks them a question related to the previous game: Why can the king have nerves destroyed, for what reasons may he require silence and peace? The teacher respects all learner answers as much as possible. In conclusion, he sums up that the king wanted peace for various reasons, but lately he has been most troubled by the question of who will be his successor. The purpose of this

conversation will be to link the opening game and the story that will follow. Learners will also realise that human behaviour can have different motivations.

Another dramatic activity is the Game of Counsellors activity. In this part of the teaching unit, the learners become royal advisers and the teacher takes on the role of king. The discussion will begin the moment the king sits in a chair in a circle and addresses his advisers. He tells them that he is worried about who to choose as his successor. He does not ask them for specific names, but he wants them to advise him on what qualities the monarch should have. Each proposal is discussed (what is the specific property of good, as manifested in governance ...) and the ability or property with which the majority agrees is written on the board so that learners have it in front of their eyes. In the end, the king thanks the counsellors for their help and says that he will take all this into account when choosing his successor. The discussion in the roles gives children the opportunity to think about the qualities that a person standing at the head of the state should have, and in fact every person who is in a superior position to other people. The role of counsellors can deepen their sense of self-worth and importance and can strengthen their commitment to the game.

In the next part, the teacher divides the learners into smaller groups (3-5-member groups). Each group will be given its own assignment - a problem situation. Their task will be to briefly discuss this situation twice and show it to others: How would a good king solve the problem? How would an evil king behave in the same situation? Learners are given ten minutes to prepare, then perform the scenes. This should be followed by a brief reflection on how each king behaved, what was good in his behaviour and what was bad. Each group then plays only one scene, either from the point of view of a good or a bad king. In this case, it takes about 5 minutes to prepare. Examples of possible topics:

◆ The country will be affected by crop failure. The subjects come to the king with a request for tax forgiveness. Does the king hear them?

◆ A thief has been caught robbing travellers for years. He has amassed great wealth, which he offers to the king in exchange for release. What will the king do?

◆ The country has been waging a war with the neighbouring kingdom for disputed territory for years. The neighbouring king offers a truce and the division of the territory into exact halves. Will the king accept his proposal?

◆ How will the king behave when a new young servant pours wine (breaks cup, vase ...)?

◆ As a result of the drought, the wells have dried up and there is no water. What will the king advise his people?

In the final part of the first block, the teacher reads the text of the fairy tale *Salt Over Gold*. Listening to the fairy tale can lead to a short introduction: "I will read you the story of a king who also chose who would sit on the throne after him. But

he was not wise enough to consider the qualities of his successor. The fairy tale will tell you what was decisive for him.”

2nd block

The essence of the second block will be a game with the rules of the King and his entourage. The teacher explains to the learners the rules of the game: the teacher represents the king, the king walks peacefully through the room and the children (court) follow him in a small distance lined up in a crowd. Whenever the king turns around, they must assume a prescribed position and thus honour the king. They must, for example, do a squat, sit down in a cross-legged posture, and the like. The teacher can come up with a greeting together with the children. Who is the slowest must join the end of the procession. The game is intended to warm up children and also as an introduction to the following topic. The final ordering of the children can be an aid in the division of tasks at the royal court - in this order, players can choose their characters. The teacher tells the learners that they will now return to the fairy tale *Salt Over Gold* and remind her of a key scene - a situation where the king called his three daughters and invited them to tell him how much they loved him. He puts a chair at the head of the room and agrees with the disciples that when he sits on this throne, he will become king, when he rises from it, he will become a teacher again. He will invite learners to take on the roles of the characters who were in the hall at the time. Learners can choose their own tasks or draw from pre-prepared tickets. In this case, it is good to have two sets of tickets, one for girls (Maruška, older sisters, chambermaid, court ladies, babysitter ...) and the other for boys (counsellor, chef, members of the guard, courts ...). The children introduce themselves briefly one by one (e.g. I am the eldest daughter, I am a chef, etc.). Learners take their places around the throne. The teacher bypasses the learners and asks them supplementary questions to help them characterise themselves, including their relationship to the royal family. For example, “How long have you been working for the king? How do you get along with the king? Do you feel sufficiently valued? What are you doing to make the king happy? How do princesses treat you? Do you have a friend you can trust?” The mass scene comes to life as the king sits on the throne and addresses his daughters. He can use his own words or text from a fairy tale. He addresses all three daughters, who answer him in their own words. After Maruška's answer, the king - the teacher leaves the throne and lets the whole picture be immobilised - says the stop signal (it can also be the sound of a triangle, or another agreed signal). The goal is to survive the key situation of the fairy tale, to empathise with the characters.

Outside the task, the teacher instructs the players that when the signal sounds again, the image comes to life. Maruška walks through the hall, says goodbye to everyone and stops by for a moment, and the person should say out loud what he/she thinks about the king's question, about the daughters' answer, etc. When

Maruška completes her journey, she meets the teacher on the other side of the room, who becomes a grandmother by throwing a headscarf over her head. She asks Maruška what happened to her, why she is sad and gives her refuge. She turns back into a king, returns to the throne, and asks his court to tell him how much they love him. Each of the halls should come up with their own comparison. The king responds to their answers, he also asks his two older daughters if they find a specific comparison appropriate. If he is not satisfied, he may even threaten to expel a courtier from his royal court or deprive him of the title of nobleman.

They all leave their tasks and sit in a circle. The teacher asks the learners questions about what they have just experienced. The content of the final part of the second block will be a discussion on the topic: How to know love. They all leave their tasks, sit in a circle. The teacher asks the learners questions about what they have just experienced.

- Did the courtiers mean their flatteries honestly?
- What comparisons were they looking for and why?
- Did anyone have the courage to say something less flattering?
- Can true love be identified by words?
- How do we know it sooner?
- When did Maruška show her love for her father in a fairy tale?
- How did she prove?
- How did her sisters show it?
- How could the king see which of his daughters was really honest with her words?

3rd block

In the introductory part of the third block, the teacher explains to the learners the essence of the game The Feast.

a) Learners walk around the class. At the teacher's signal they will form groups according to the assignment, they will break up at the next signal and will form a group again at the new signal. The task of creating groups is very general, it is necessary to quickly agree among learners. Examples: most popular colour, animal, season, fairy tale, sports, fruit ... The last task will be to create groups according to your favourite dishes.

b) Learners sit in a circle so that the representatives of their favourite dishes take turns. There is always one chair less in the circle than there are players. The one who did not get the chair stands in the middle of the circle and says the names of the dishes. If he/she says food that is not represented in the circle, no one is allowed to move. When pronouncing the name of the food that is present, its representatives must exchange places. If the word "feast" is said, everyone has to swap places. The player in the middle is trying to occupy one of the vacancies. If he/she succeeds, the learner without a free chair goes to the centre of the circle.

The teacher invites learners to say their other favourite dishes - salty in the first round, sweet in the second.

The core of this block will be the activity Unsalted menu for the king. The teacher divides learners into 3-5-member groups (they will be chefs in the castle kitchen). The teacher in the role of king will give them the task of preparing a menu for the whole day, in which there will be meals that do not need to be salted. Learners have 5-10 minutes to prepare and then read the menus. The teacher-king shows enthusiasm for the choice of food, gradually, as the food is repeated, his attitude is lukewarm. Learners stay in groups, now they will be guests at the festivities. They agree on what food they will eat and present it as a riddle for others (similar to playing the “craftsmen”). The groups will perform the eating of food simultaneously, the teacher leads the activity: Imagine that you eat such food all the time, every day. Then the learners will play the transformation of their reactions into sweet food. Another activity is the Return of Maruška with salt. Learners remain in their roles of guests. The teacher welcomes Maruška with a salt shaker (she can use improvisation or the text of a fairy tale). In the final part of this block, the teacher leads the discussion in a circle: Ordinary things for life

- Which of you thinks you'd do without salt in your life?
- What else is necessary for life and seemingly as insignificant as salt?
- Could Maruška have used another comparison? What?
- How do we know what the true values are?

The purpose of the conversation is to begin to perceive the salt from the fairy tale as a metaphor for things that we take for granted, and their temporary loss will help us realise their meaning.

4th block

The teacher acquaints learners with the content of the current lesson; it will be the preparation for the dramatization of the fairy tale Salt Over Gold. The previous lessons formed the basis for the interpretation of the fairy tale, the learners were able to empathise with the actions of the individual heroes of the fairy tale through role-playing. Because the output of the project is the dramatization of a fairy tale, the division of tasks plays a key role in the success of the project. The teacher has the decisive say here, but also the learners have the opportunity to comment on the assignment of individual tasks. We use an abbreviated and simplified version of the fairy tale. Learners do not have to learn individual acts by heart, the goal being to empathise with the role. The teacher divides the roles: narrator, king, Maruška, 1st daughter, 2nd daughter, old woman. Learners learn their texts according to the script. Another group of learners will create scenery, costumes and prepare props. The output will not be dramatization in the theatrical sense of the word, so costumes and props do not have to be perfect, it will only be a symbolic indication. The teacher is a dramatization director, gives instructions, has

two assistants - one for practicing dramatization, the other for making costumes and scenery. As a final project, learners will demonstrate the dramatization of a fairy tale in a school club for younger classmates (or during the enrolment of children in the first year).

Within the humanities, literature, in our view literature for children and young people, is one of the important sources of creative drama. Literary education has a central position as an aesthetic subject, because it offers a wide range of opportunities for the development of the child's personality in relation to himself/herself and the surrounding world through artistic literature. Its content is unique among the subjects, although most of the general goals are similar not only to creative drama, but also to other aesthetic and educational subjects. The learning process can also be classified as experiential and activity-based learning, as in creative drama. Many teachers are familiar with creative drama as a method of teaching literature and composition, and for some it functions as a teaching principle that goes across all subjects, also characterising teachers' teaching style and approach to life. Literary education under school conditions should be a process of getting in contact with art. This process can be completed in various ways. An experienced and creative teacher knows that literary education is not just reading and reproducing a read text, or even an "explanation" of the main idea. Creative contact with artistic literature, which reading and literary education lessons should definitely be, create in learners a model that works in their later lives, as the child usually develops a relationship with books and reading habits at a younger reading age. The methods of creative drama play an important role here, only complementing the methods of literary education - listening, speaking, reading, writing - and other teaching methods. Creative drama enriches them with action, action and activities done for the experience itself. In this way, the literary-educational process is enriched by another important goal, which is the process itself, not just a product in the form of knowledge and skills.

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2 Reading literacy of learners: problems/probes/visions

Gabriela Magalová

Many university students of literature like textbooks that have descriptive character. They offer an enumeration of basic facts about particular literary periods, briefly characterise them, name representatives of specific periods, and, even more briefly, familiarise students with literary works that represent individual epochs. Such textbooks are only a burden for mechanical memory, not demanding the synthesis of facts or the development of interpretive skills.

The described practices are a kind of generational curse of the Slovak education system. Many future teachers of languages and literature hold such ideas when they come to study at the university. They had been taught that each question requires a specific answer that can be learned since literature is a subject like any other. Many university teachers try to eliminate such an approach to the issue during their students' studies. Still, it is not always possible to eradicate something that is learned at primary and secondary schools.

However, the more Slovak school policy (and thus each specific university) focuses on attracting as many students as possible, the less it can place high demands on the in-depth knowledge of students. In addition, secondary school graduates choose pedagogical fields of study less and less, which means that the range of issues is cycled. The crisis in education is increasing, and we are beginning to feel a shortage of teachers in many fields. Although the existing analyses try to fix this situation, their solution is usually linked to current political decisions. As *pars pro toto*, one may draw attention to a document from 2012 entitled *Transformácia vysokoškolského vzdelávania učiteľov v kontexte reformy regionálneho školstva* [Transformation of Higher Education of Teachers in the Context of the Reform of Regional Education], which claims that “the current concept of teacher education in Slovakia is further unsustainable from an international, theoretical and professional-practical point of view and needs to be reformed” (Transformácia vysokoškolského vzdelávania ..., 2012, p. 136). Also, Beláková talks about the malfunction of the system in connection with the undergraduate training of future teachers when she mentions the rupture between the theoretical university education and direct teaching in schools: “... we

get into a looped process in which, as part of teacher training, we try to present forms and methods to students, but in the event of a clash with practice they are not able to apply them” (Beláková, 2019, p. 546).

Teaching language and literature in primary or secondary school (or the formation of the reader from kindergarten to adulthood) cannot be a matter of routine activities and procedures today. The state of teaching literature is sufficiently evidenced by PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) testing, which has been conducted in Slovakia since 2001. The testing evaluates and compares the reading literacy of Slovak learners in the 4th grade of primary school (approximately 10-year-old respondents, that is, the learners before their secondary education), pursuing three aspects: reading goals, comprehension processes and reading habits and attitudes. The first two aspects are evaluated based on a written reading test; the third aspect is monitored through data collected from questionnaires (Gallová & Kelemen, 2013, p. 4). The fourth grade was chosen for testing because learners at this age stop learning to read and start learning by reading. PIRLS thus provides us with sufficient statistical data on a five-year periodicity in the tendency of our learners’ performance in the field of reading literacy. The last testing was in 2016. It is clear from the data that in the relative indicator, “The Slovak Republic ranks 17th out of 22 participating European Union member states, the positive fact is that the value of this statistical indicator in the last two international surveys is at the same level and does not decrease (2011 - 535 points, 2016 - 535 points)” (Plavčan, 2019, p. 86).

Many interesting findings can be learned from the test results, not only about the respondents, about the teachers of literature, about domestic conditions or attitudes and priorities of the management of individual schools, but - and this is the main thing - a lot can be deduced from them for literature teachers, for the parents of respondents, for professionals or teacher trainers. There are studies for which this material served as a starting point for reflections on the correlation between the PIRLS results of the individual participating EU countries and OECD countries and the growth of gross domestic product, thus, on the influence of macroeconomic indicators on the development of children’s reading competencies (Plavčan, 2019). And although this relationship has not been mathematically confirmed, the author concludes that “the findings of the secondary analysis in PIRLS reading literacy may be useful for some member states of the European Union in deciding the direction of public economic and school policy ... especially the member states that spend a below-average percentage of gross domestic product on education as well as those member states, including Slovakia, which scored a below-average number of points in the PIRLS learner reading literacy in the observed period from 2001 to 2016” (Plavčan, 2019, p. 100 - 101).

Broader than the PIRLS testing is the testing of 15-year-old learners through PISA (Program for International Student Assessment), in which reading literacy is

assessed as one of many other competencies; Slovakia has been involved in this project since 2003. In the last PISA evaluation of 2018, Slovakia was placed below the average. The document *National Report PISA 2018* (Miklovičová & Valovič, 2019) says that “The value of the average performance of OECD countries was set at 493 points in the 2009 PISA cycle, while Slovak learners achieved a performance of 477 points in reading literacy in the mentioned PISA cycle, i.e. below the average of OECD countries. The average value of performance in reading literacy within the OECD countries decreased in the 2018 PISA cycle to 487 points, while Slovak learners achieved a performance of 458 points, which is below the average of OECD countries” (p. 32).

The problem with the results of the reading literacy assessment in Slovakia would undoubtedly have more reasons. In this text, however, I want to focus on those reasons for the failure of learners in the field of reading competencies which are primarily related to the didactic aspects of teaching literature. I believe that a change in the view of certain didactic phenomena in connection with the teaching of literature by future teachers - university students - can more quickly start the mentioned reform movements requiring an internal rebirth of teachers' thinking.

The theme of teachers, like the theme of politics, is an area in which various perspectives find their application; there are not many people who would not have an opinion on the school system (whether as parents, learners, ex-learners, ex-parents, laypeople, experts, politicians). Changes in politics, frequent rotation of governments - and thus of the people who run education - may block the possible (right) choice of direction for innovation in teaching, bringing new changes, stopping previous projects, and starting new ones. There is no time to verify, anchor the system, and “install” innovations in the methodological debate, to observe and draw relevant conclusions. The same problems as in Slovakia are perceived in the Czech Republic. The Czech professors Pavel Doulák and Jiří Škoda described this situation as follows: “There are several reasons why the effectiveness of various measures is low. One of them is that the Czech education system lacks a period of stability, a period when the actors of the education system would not have to deal with the fulfilment and implementation of innovations but could work in peace as well” (2019, p. 38).

The issue has been complicated in Slovakia by the implementation of a mixed education system which does not fit into any of the three known standard models - the model of a unified structure, the model of traditional basic curricula, and the model of different currents (Národný program rozvoja výchovy a vzdelávania, p. 18). In terms of the above standard typology, the Slovak system represents a one-structure model with an atypical outflow of learners during lower secondary education (i.e. the second stage of primary school - ISCED 2) to other types of schools [...], and therefore the national program for the development of education focuses on the gradual harmonisation of the Slovak education system with one of

the standard European educational models, namely with the one-structure model, which is closest to the Slovak system (Národný program rozvoja výchovy a vzdelávania, p. 20). The indicated tendencies declare the preparation of further changes in the school system in the coming period (which was further disrupted by the atypical situation in connection with the covid pandemic). And because structural change must always be logically linked to the implementation of changes within the system from pre-school upwards, a period of stability cannot currently be expected.

The philosophy of education itself is undergoing marked changes. The positivist model replaces the constructivist model, which is based on the fact that "the individual actively constructs and reconstructs their reality to give meaning to their experience. New experiences are filtered through mental structures (schemes) and are included in previous knowledge, beliefs, concepts, assumptions and desires" (Tomengová, 2012, p. 8). Communication teaching supports these goals and is at the heart of 21st-century school educational activities. The dialogue in education is not understood as a novelty, for communication principles were formulated already by Komenský in his *Didactics*, and the need for dialogue was already known in Socratic times. In the light of new didactic research, communication teaching is based on many studies (Bruner, 1986; Šed'ová, 2011; Liptáková, 2011), so one can come across the concepts of dialogue scaffolding, dialogical pedagogy, or pedagogical communication, with each of the terms generally referring to the roles of actors and their function, procedures that lead to improved cognition and learning.

In Slovak language and literature, attention is no longer focused on learners' cognitive knowledge, as has been the case in previous decades. Still, it offers - especially in the literary component - the opportunity to understand the world of literary text as a space for understanding life situations in a holistic form of functioning, in connection to history on the one hand and reality on the other, and the role of the author in it. "In the 'literature' component, primary attention is paid to the development of learners' abilities to understand the world through art and removal of the conviction that cognitive approach to the world around them is the only one and cannot be substituted by other ways of understanding, making them aware of the specificities which the aesthetic approach to reality represents" (Pokrivčáková & Pokrivčák, 2016, p. 140). Literary education does not work only with the word in its primary semantics but forces the possibility of metaphorical understanding of what is in text, in ourselves, which forms the core of human thought. Aesthetic value is the added value; the codes it brings form a secret full of challenging tasks, but without the teacher's help, they remain as if "cursed," undiscovered. At the same time, the artistic text has the competence to enter into the intimacy of our lives because "the goal of literary education is reading [...] as a sign of human culture. It is also necessary because, with the ever-increasing

liberalisation of traditional values, adolescents often lose the ability to distinguish between good and evil ..." (Lomenčík, 2019, p. 8). In these intentions, teachers of literature are considered to be the ones who should supplement their professional competence with ethical and moral qualities, helping find the key to artistic texts that always in some way hide questions about our being.

The concept of facilitator

Let us now take a closer look at the term facilitator, preferred in the new pedagogical manuals for several decades. The term speaks of a new role/function of a teacher in the teaching process. In the constructivist sense, the teacher "moves from the position of mentor passing on knowledge to individuals to the position of the facilitator who facilitates the construction of new knowledge. He/she prepares learners for new situations, indirectly manages [...], is not a guarantor of truth and does not pretend to know everything and best. The teacher becomes the guarantor of the method, assisting and accompanying students comprehensively in their work, which is the search for knowledge" (Šándorová, 2013, p. 7). The definition of facilitator can be found in virtually every modern methodological manual. It is closely connected with the concept of critical thinking, communication teaching. We understand it as the opposite of traditional frontal teaching in which the teacher passes on the authoritative educational content to learners forced to the passive role of recipients. We are not concerned with the enumerating of available views on the concept itself, but with its misunderstanding in the educational practice itself in literary education classes.

A key aspect of the understanding of facilitation is the time allocated to learners' verbal utterances. In his research on the frequency of learner-teacher conversations in the teaching unit, Gavora claims that out of the total number of verbal and non-verbal expressions, up to two-thirds are the oral activity of the teacher and learners in class. Of the verbal speech in the lesson, two-thirds are the verbal activity of the teacher, and of this share, two-thirds are the teacher's direct influence on the learners (Gavora, 2003). The research was concerned with traditional schools. The author analysed communication rules for teachers and learners as put forth in the internal school rules (which contain only instructions for the time suitability of learner utterances, learner's attitude in verbal communication with teachers, etc.). Similar results were shown by research in other countries as early as the end of the 20th century (Cazden, 1988) and provide a sufficiently clear picture of how slowly communication teaching is practised in our schools.

A communication teaching lesson should turn the time allowance of communication activities/statements in favour of learner statements. However, the facilitator role is often understood (and measured) precisely through the ratio of the time allowance of the utterances of both parties, which can be misleading.

The facilitator often divides educational activities to pursue a particular goal into several teaching units, which may differ in the scope of the teacher's communication activities and the learners' communication activities. This means that a teacher's communication activity can sometimes be dominant and prevail over learner conversations. However, I am convinced that the role of teacher-facilitator does not have to be eliminated.

Facilitation in project teaching in the field of language and communication

An example is the project teaching of literature, which often requires a more significant subsidy of teaching units. Let us look at this fact specifically. I intentionally do not want to create formal preparation for teaching, only offer suggestions where the role of the teacher as a facilitator (measured by the frequency of mutual communication services) differs depending on the implementation of a specific stage of project teaching.

The teacher of Slovak language and literature at the secondary level of primary schools implements a project in language and communication focused on media literacy, which may be called "furious reporters". It is intended for the 6th grade of primary school (or for the 2nd level of primary school, and the teacher modifies the difficulty of tasks according to learners' age and mental abilities). Through media activities, the teacher pursues the goal of developing learners' media literacy, acquainting them with the media format of the survey, creating space for spontaneous communication activities at a specific time and space in contact with random adult respondents. There can be several particular goals; in our case, it will be primarily the implementation of a survey in the city of residence on the topic of "young people yesterday and today - school yesterday and today".

The first lessons, which introduce learners to the issue, will be more directed by the teacher. He/she introduces learners to media issues by adjusting the class, props (classic camera, classic microphone, examples of periodicals on the table together with magazines for children and youth, etc.). The teacher begins a conversation with learners about what will be of interest: the media. This concept is key to creating a mind map (learner suggestions are written on the board, they can have a substantive character, but also evaluative, we first write everything that learners say, for example: television, internet, newspapers, media are dangerous, we can not devote much time to them, they are attractive, older people do not understand them, etc.). Their selection follows. This step already distinguishes between the terms that name the individual types of media substantively and the terms that tell about their reach/quality/connection to other facts. The teacher continues to move the group of substantive terms in the direction she has set; in our project, they are audiovisual media - news genres - survey. In this chain, we will first mention the reportage genre, explain who the furious reporter (E. E.

Kisch) was and his motivation to “always be there”, to see and try things right in the field, live. The survey will open a space for trying out such a position, check communication readiness, etc.

At this stage, the communication teaching in the teaching unit is realised. Still, the teacher’s participation dominates, her intention to lead the conversation in the direction of the project itself. Depending on many factors, the teacher can divide this phase into two teaching units. At first glance, it seems that communication teaching is only partially implemented, that it is more or less frontal teaching with guided conversation and the use of a mind map. Facilitation, which is characterised by a lower input of the teacher’s authority into the activities of learners, i.e. the “management” of learner activities, is not realised or realised only minimally. This view offers conclusions about the low level of communication teaching, but it is a partial view. The subsequent phases of the implementation of the project already bring many concrete outputs, which would not have happened without the teacher’s initial dominant direction of activities. The ratio of communication activities for the benefit of the learner changes only in the following phases.

The second phase brings the practice of specific survey activities. It can use role-playing methods, working in pairs and a team. The topic “young people yesterday and today - school yesterday and today” will be first opened in the discussion: “What is today’s education? How do your parents, grandparents remember school? What was good and what was bad? What would you like to experience? What would you not want to experience?” The teacher requires meaningful answers from the learners with argumentation. Gradually, however, he withdraws from leading the discussion and lets it flow freely in the learners’ conversation. She then calls for a summary of the facts in comparison: “school today” versus “school in the past” - this summary can be a matter of collective synthesis (work on a blackboard after brainstorming) or in groups or individually.

Knowledge about the school in the past and today often only records information conveyed (I heard this from older people, but I did not experience it myself). However, by asking a question, the interviewer tries to find out the respondents’ opinions and, at the same time, activate them, provoke them with questions that demand more comprehensive answers. The teacher will offer a space for each learner to first formulate their questions in writing, as each interviewer does, for example:

1. Do you think that young people find it harder at school today than you did when you went to school?
2. What is your experience with young people?
3. What is the difference between today’s generation and your generation?
4. What hinders you about young people?
5. Have you encountered any bad or good qualities of young people? (For example, smoking, alcohol)?

6. Do you think that today's school educates better?
7. What would you include into schools if you became a principal?

In this phase, we will also use the role-playing method. Selected learners choose a prop (hat, scarf, cap, bow), which identifies them with a particular gender and age person, whom the interviewer stops to ask a question. (For the first time, a teacher can take on this role and show how, for example, an 80-year-old woman would answer specific questions, what can be expected of her and what is not, which questions are appropriate and which are not.) Learners consider their questions, delete or correct them, classify them together with the teacher, argue together in their favour or against according to the suitability or the established situation.

In this phase, the preparation of the project is already taken over by the learners' communication activities, but the teacher directs and, together with others, evaluates their communication attempts. She uses role-playing, does not resist the use of humour in the educational process (for example, playing the meeting of the interviewer with a deaf grandmother), uses humorous situations as an argument in favour or against the relevance of the question asked. The teacher can also use the learners' communication experiments in this training phase in the final comparison during the evaluation of the project at the end. The phase also requires technical training in working with a dictaphone/telephone, training in correct articulation, the pace of speech, formulation of questions or logical judgments concerning selecting suitable places for the creation of surveys, selection of respondents, etc.

In the third phase, an outdoor survey is conducted, and the teacher monitors the learners' activities as an observer. She directs only minimally, records the learners' interview results on the camera, collects material.

The fourth phase - processing and evaluating learner activities and performances - can take various forms. It can be a debate, the results of which are recorded and assessed (say, as a percentage, which leaves room for an interdisciplinary relationship with mathematics). Learners can express their experiences in writing, prepare an analysis in a school magazine - or write a story or description of activities. It is also possible to contact the regional media and mediate the activities directly with reporters - television staff. However, it is also possible to create a photographic record with verbal comments that capture the various phases of the project and then produce a documentary strip ("large leporello" in the school hallway or around the classroom), which can be promoted at various school events. It is possible to follow up with other media activities (making a report, editing a school magazine, presenting a project in the media, etc.).

A more detailed description of these activities shows that in educational activities focused on communicative teaching, the teacher facilitation does not appear only as “managerial supervision”, measurable by the frequency of his input into learners’ communication activities. The facilitator can also narrate and explain, i.e., a traditional teacher handing out tasks or determining procedures. Not all activities in the learning process can be based solely on learner choice. The teacher’s determination, her unequivocal instruction, does not have to be an undemocratic element. On the contrary, foresight can prevent the chaos to which misunderstood “facilitation” leads.

Creativity and evaluation

Creativity lies in divergent thinking, and it is the interaction of the subject with the object in which the subject changes the surrounding world, creates new and valuable things for the subject (Zelinová & Zelina, 1997). Today we no longer have to convince anyone of the significant share of creativity not only in education but in every area of our lives. However, we do not want to pay attention to familiar things but focus on what resonates with creativity in the educational environment as an unresolved or controversial aspect. The discussion can be opened with the following starting quote: “Creativity is important because it allows learners to do ‘anything’, and all outputs are rated as good. Nothing is bad in this case, but the facilitator can suggest a different procedure, a different statement, a different motive” (Ivanová, 2014, p. 15).

This view on the evaluation of creative actions is by no means unique. In aesthetic subjects, the creative approach and the creative outputs of learners are represented naturally. Still, creativity in a broader sense, i.e. as a principle of finding ideas, solutions in general, is (or should be) represented in the whole spectrum of teaching units. Here too, however, the prevailing opinion on assessment caution prevails: “When evaluating the products and learning outcomes of learners in creative teaching, it is necessary to apply democratic and humanistically oriented assessment, in which verbal assessment prevails over classification. The teacher must keep in mind that the fears of evaluation can have an inhibitory effect on learners’ creative performance” (Lokšová, 2002, p. 64).

Of course, in the above quotes, one can accept many things (humanistically oriented evaluation, predominance of verbal assessment). Still, there also opens up a vast space for discussion: is it pedagogically correct and beneficial for learners if the teacher evaluates the performances associated with creative aesthetics through the attitude that all “performance is rated as good, nothing is bad”? Doesn’t this one-sided universalism do more harm than good to the teacher himself?

In any case, the teacher must focus on the goal she sets in her creative activity. Creativity must be understood as a process, and it has its stages of development. It

is characterised by incompleteness, which means that there is no point that could be identified as achieving the highest possible degree of creativity. It is essential to offer a series of tasks that will support creativity (understood as processuality) in school practice. In connection with the Slovak language and literature teaching, the creative aspect can be used both in language lessons and in literature lessons. To the maximum extent possible, creativity will find its space in composition classes. We do not reach literary creativity (creative writing) to the same extent for all learners, but we should strive to achieve the highest possible degree of creativity for individual learners.

Creativity is not only imagination (with which we work most often in literary or composition lessons). Its sign is fluency (fluent thinking), flexibility (flexible thinking), originality, elaboration (ability to improve thinking), willingness to take risks, preference of competencies (search for alternatives), the ability to give one's thoughts a system) and curiosity. The seventh sign is the imagination itself - i.e. the ability to imagine (visualise), create ideas, images, dream in the world of fantasy, feel intuitively, overcome imaginary or artificial boundaries" (Zelinová & Zelina, 1997).

In connection with the teaching of Slovak language and literature, creativity is developed through a series of stylistic exercises, which have the task of developing vocabulary. In such a case, these activities express the conceptual "portfolio" (conceptual database, finding out the extension of vocabulary) of a particular learner. Such activity can be measured very easily and yet playfully, creatively. The evaluation can be expressed in a clear table placed under the task, so that each learner has an already set evaluation according to the degree of solution of the conceptual task. She has the opportunity to decide whether the result will be published or not. The teacher can also generally evaluate the task publicly, if, for example, the learners worked in groups, or at the end, evaluate mathematically how many learners occurred in zone A, B, C and the like. If the work is set up as a competition, the teacher should specifically highlight learners' work in zone A. The evaluation of initial creative activities is desirable here.

I will provide the task that can be applied in composition (or creative writing) lessons with a proposal for its assessment:

1 Simple task:

Create new words by adding a vowel. Be careful that they are not of the same base.

Example: **thin - thinly** (adj. - adverb. Of the same base = **incorrect**)

thin - think, thing... (**correct**, the added vowel created the word of a different base)

plan _____ (plane...)

be _____ (bee...)

drop _____ (droop...)

round _____ (rounds...)

head _____ (ahead, heal...)

You get 1 point for each correctly created word. How many points did you get? Write down the points in the table and read the assessment.

Zone	Points	My level reached	Assessment
A	10 words - 9 words		you are excellent, you have a rich vocabulary and good combination skills
B	8 words - 7 words		very well, your combination skills are at a high level
C	6 words - 5 words		nice result, work on yourself further
D	4 words - 3 words		this is an average result, read more, the best way to improve your vocabulary
E	2 words - 0 words		poor result, you probably don't read much, take more time to read and you will improve

Tasks of this measurable type can be simple or combined. In combination, they can reflect, for example, the breadth of students' vocabulary and, at the same time, their ability to tell a short story. In this type of tasks, it is possible to assess again in a table. The learner will receive feedback at the end if they check the fulfilment of the criteria in the assignment. After completing step 1 (create new words by adding a vowel), a simple task can be further expanded with other creative aspects, for example: create a short story from new words (there is a certain amount of time to complete the task). Use as many words as you created in the previous task in the story.

Such tasks are measurable and can be expressed explicitly in the scoring. However, in the final verbal evaluation of the teacher, other qualities of the text (wittiness of the story, idea, topic, etc.), which may not be related to the points, may be highlighted.

Some types of creative learner activities require a particular approach from the teacher to evaluate them. There are exercises that develop creative literary activities, but this creativity bears traces of mechanical direction (i.e., the application of a certain strict rule, which makes learner creativity limiting as well). These are tasks in which, for example, the learner gets a summary of nouns from various areas - and the task is to create a text that will use as many nouns listed in the table list before creating the text itself. Another rule can limit the task, for example, a genre (from the mentioned nouns, write a fairy tale/sci-fi story/speech, etc.). The teacher can limit the length of the text with the indicated lines, but the task can also be limited by time (you have 5 minutes to do it), and so on. One word used in the text is counted as one word, the learner counts the point only after the first use in the text.

2 Creative task with limiting elements

From the following nouns, create a story in which you will use as many terms from the table as possible.

bananas	glue	dragon		
	clown	ear	swallow	
princess	policeman		firefighter	cap
container				
fly girl	boy	Indian	mustache	
socks	mobile	CACTUS		LADDLE
	corona			injection
	flea	dinosaur		blizzard
EGG		corals		
oRANGE				
accordion				

Example:

1. The **cap** fell into the **container** and cried. A **policeman** went there and heard a moan. "Can I hear a cry here? Or is it just ringing in my **ear**?" He wonders. He throws his head, smiles under his **moustache**, and walks on. (5 points)
2. **Dinosaur** got sick. It was at **corona** time, so he decided to go for an **injection**. He lined up two meters behind the **fly**. But since the dinosaur was large, a **firefighter** had to come with a hose because the **injection** was very small for him. (6 points)
3. There was a small Indian behind a **cactus** in faraway Africa. He liked **bananas** and **oranges**, but when he peeled them, **flies** always came and sat on the fruit. "Hash, monsters," the **Indian** insisted. He said he had to do something about it, so he bought **fly glue**. (7 points)

In the table under the task, learners will find verbal assessments and the teacher can evaluate the fulfilment of the task in the zone A, B, C, and so on. Every learner knows how she has succeeded in the creative task and how she compares with her classmates. From this point of view (number of words used in the story), evaluation is possible.

However, if we were to evaluate learners' stylistic performance, the teacher in this case cannot prefer any creative experiment, because learners tried to create a (nonsense) text from certain key concepts that are available to everyone. The learner's creativity lies in the ability to combine seemingly incompatible elements

into a story in certain contexts (although unrealistic). There is no better or worse variant of text creation in this assignment, in assignments of this type the thesis “all outputs are evaluated as good, nothing is bad” could be accepted. As you can see, however, this is only one case of many other creative possibilities in literature classes.

We are approaching a demonstration that will help us think about evaluating literary creativity in the true sense of the word. This is no longer a matter of creativity with limiting elements (if, however, we do not consider the genre requirements of the department, the scope or the form of the text to be limiting elements). It is precisely in these tasks that teachers are most likely to decide not to evaluate learner performance negatively in any case, because it is individual creativity that “allows learners to do anything” (Ivanová, 2014, p. 15). If we observed this literally, we would have a world full of artists on the same level and with a little irony - we would have no one to judge, evaluate, compare them. The concept of a literary critic would be semantically empty, and we would have to state the incompetence, or rather the impossibility of moving anything in this area to a qualitatively higher level. That is not the case. The study of artistic (prosaic or poetic) text has developed its methodology over a long period of research. The creativity applied in literature is at the beginning of a long process, which, ideally, produces creative personalities. At today’s stage of development of society and education, it is not idealistic to say that it is the combination of learner literary creativity and quality professional guidance by a literary teacher that creates the optimal combination for artistic growth. Thus, if a teacher decides, in the name of a false democratic principle, to make an exclusive positive evaluation of every single learner’s creative performance, he or she will ultimately unify all of them, which means giving a higher value to a performance with a small measure of creativity (which can be a positive encouragement for some learners), but taking away the value from performances with an above-average creative charge, which can be a demotivating element for creative individuals.

Very often we encounter just such an attitude among teachers, which, in the name of a misunderstood democratic and humane view, perceives children’s creativity as a space in which everyone meets at the same level. However, the teacher as an expert must know that, as in other subjects, in the field of literary creativity, he will not help the learner if he only praises him, does not point out incorrect procedures, possible improvements, does not explain rhythm in verse, rhyming rules, possibilities of dynamisation of dialogues, or other stylistic principles when producing an artistic text. The fact that it positively evaluates the learners’ efforts is a right and necessary thing, it is an element of the psychological stimulus that creates a positive climate in the classroom. However, if the teacher’s evaluation stops right where his professional guidance is to begin, a vacuum will be created in the phase of creating a natural atmosphere for education, for learning

about the issue, for the development of learner creativity itself. Giving children time for creativity is not creativity per se, it is just an initial signal. Only the response of an individual to this signal in conjunction with a professional view (evaluation) can lead to an increase in the development of a particular learner's talent.

If the teacher plans a creative writing lesson, considers working with verse and rhyme, she should explain the basic rules: what is considered a full-fledged rhyme? And what is an incomplete rhyme? Is rhyme the agreement of one vowel at the end of a verse? Is creating a full-fledged rhyme already an art? Or is it just a "craft activity"? If a teacher cannot answer these questions on her own and considers her work to be innovative because she has used an "innovative" method, the effort is often missed (Magalová, 2018). Usually, the space for analytical work with learners' texts reveals that even to observe certain rules of rhyming is not enough to create a text that will be interesting for readers. We need an idea, a story, which we "clothe" into words - bearers of a certain strength and atmosphere. A creative superstructure is needed here.

Viera Eliášová claims that in "some publications, mainly of English-speaking provenance, the term creative poetry is replaced by the term writing poetry (písanie poézie) or poetry in the classroom (poézia vo vyučovaní)" (Eliášová, 2006, p. 12). She quotes Maley and Duff who maintain that writing poetry "... is not writing Poetry (with a capital P)", but writing thoughts in the form of a poem: like when learners have the task of writing their thoughts in the form of a brief record, reflection, or letter" (Maley & Duff, 1990, p. 4). It is really more useful for learners to talk about creative experiments in the creative phase and to avoid the teacher's summary final evaluation, in the spirit of the statements like "all your creations are beautiful, you have proved that each of you is a poet". Using this approach, what the teacher might achieve is that the learner will really get the idea that there is no need to know anything more than to master a few principles to create an artistic text - and art is in the world.

It is certain that the general positive evaluations of learners' creative work at the end of the lesson have the power to promote a positive classroom climate, and this is, of course, an important factor. On the other hand, it must be remembered that with an uncritical praise of performance in the field of literary creativity, we can also support the false awareness of less talented individuals about the unquestionable value of their work. More than one writer comes across this phenomenon when, as a judge in literary competitions, he/she is confronted with texts of below-average quality, which were previously highly valued in the school rounds of literary work. Knowing the value of a learner's specific creative performance in comparison with wider competition is often a great disappointment (which, after the exclusive praise of a literature teacher, becomes an unfair verdict in the learner's eyes).

It is not easy to be a critical and at the same time kind and motivating teacher of literature. It turns out that it is the combination of these qualities that creates the desired ingredient for the learners' growth in knowledge as well as in their human dimension, whether it is the literary creativity of learners or their approach to the artistic text, which also activates a whole lot of human attitudes. "Literature is a matter of a human being as such, it does not only address partial interests, it does not develop partial abilities, but forms a relationship to reality in its entirety. The reader, who goes through the world of literature, also goes through the world of experiences accumulated during the long years of human existence. Touching with this experience strengthens the feeling of his/her belonging to other people" (Vítězová, 2009, p. 8).

The research of teacher trainers from the Czech Republic, who dealt with the relationship between teacher criticism and possible learner frustration, supports our considerations. "So, it turns out that the equation 'critical teacher causes learner frustration' does not apply. [...] the fact that criticism can have its paradoxical effects is known in educational psychology - the criticised receives the message that the teacher's opinion about his/her abilities is high, and therefore may tend to justify this opinion [...] So if our teachers give up an explicit evaluation of learner performance, not only do they weaken their didactic activity, but at the same time they do not seem to strengthen their relationship with learners" (Šed'ová, 2010, p. 84).

It turns out that it is important for learners to know the evaluation of their performance - even in the field of creative activities in literary or composition classes. Even though this assessment will not be very encouraging at first, it does not mean that it is final. The road to success is often difficult. Wanting a learner not to stumble on this path and always walking on the paved path of success does not lead to his/her growth. In the field of creativity, this is doubly true. The teacher is one of those who is competent to evaluate. Kindly, patiently, but sober.

What can be changed

The article was begun by stating the below-average performance of our learners in the field of reading literacy. However, reading literacy goes hand in hand with literary literacy and creativity in the broadest sense. We do not have to awaken in all learners the desire to create a literary text, but creativity can also be reflected in the learners' reading itself. In what they are able to find in the text, whether they know how to read relationships, enter (metaphorically) the story. Creativity in literature is also a conversation about the extent to which they are surprised or excited by a certain word in the text, a certain procedure of the author of the short story. These categories must be evaluated by the teacher with much greater seriousness, because it is the ability to ask the right questions that leads to the development of reading literacy.

This study focused only on partial didactic problems in connection with the teaching of literature. Let us not be afraid, however, to evaluate learners' performance in the whole range of performance indicators. However, this evaluation should never lead to final verdicts, it should only indicate (fix) the learners' movements in their creative profile with professional and kind guidance from the teacher. A climate of multidimensional growth can be created in creativity, which is subjugated to the desire to work on oneself. "A creative teacher combines playfulness and discipline. It is a game with ideas, words, meanings, concepts, alternatives. He/she stubbornly plays with ideas and leads learners to do so. Playfulness excites, imaginary games attract the teacher, learners, but then after solving the problem comes hard work, hard work, discipline and struggling with obstacles, with burnout. In creative play with ideas, the teacher is undisciplined, but when trying a new procedure (experimental teaching, discovering) he/she is already disciplined, professionalism begins (Zelina, 2019, pp. 150 - 151).

The present teacher is supposed to be a facilitator, but her communication performance in literature and language classes may vary. The teacher-facilitator cannot always be perceived as a manager, whose success is evaluated by the minutes of his speeches in relation to those of the learners. This type of teaching unit must be achieved by the teacher and her team after many months of hard work, both on the part of the learner and the teacher. Facilitation is an ideal way of education, but it is a procedural matter.

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3 Teaching literature online

Jakub Hriňák

Changes in society have, throughout history, pushed the established boundaries of education. Traditional education, which has been built on the principles of the positivist approach for years, is losing its status on the grounds of social changes during recent times. In connection with social changes, globalisation and scientific research results, emphasis is placed on innovation of education, based on the principles of constructivism and critical thinking, representing one of the key areas of modern didactics. As paradigms shift in society, different perspectives are revealed and pondered in all areas. Education cannot remain unaffected by the intrinsic questions that are set forth by these. The need for a completely different approach to education became even more important during the year 2020 because the pandemic crisis of COVID-19 changed the ways of teaching. E-learning has become an obligatory component of all educational institutions like schools and universities around the world. The aspects mentioned above forced the teaching professionals to think of alternative methods of teaching during the lockdown.

1 The role of the teacher

The modern teacher is confronted with the requirements for quality and modern teaching, which will prepare students to be able to meet the present day demands. On the other hand, contemporary teachers are limited by curricular documents that do not meet the needs of today's society, especially in Slovakia, as well as by limits of their self-training, affected by insufficient cooperation of schools and methodological centres, and also by the weaknesses of postgraduate teacher training. What is more, today's teacher is confronted with the complicated situation caused by the requirements of online learning, resulting not only from the need to teach in changed conditions, but also from the low orientation of some teachers in the field of modern information technologies and methods that are suitable for online learning.

The teacher plays a very important role in the educational process and in the learner's life. They are not only educators who pass on knowledge to their students, but they are, among other things, also the manager of the lesson, a facilitator and motivator who helps students to get new knowledge using appropriate methods. Béréšová (2013) identified ten roles of a teacher:

- a manager;
- a facilitator of learning at all times;
- a model for language learning;
- a monitor;
- a resource;
- an informant;
- a tutor;
- a counsellor;
- a social worker;
- an editor.

Opinions and views on the teaching profession are often simplified and focus on only one part of teacher's work – the transfer of knowledge. However, their role is also based on development of students' relationship to learning, as well as on improvement of their awareness of strategies that allow them to work independently and effectively. The teacher should also teach students to connect theory with practice and, last but not least, they should develop their personalities. That is the reason a good teacher should not only develop student's knowledge but should be also a motivator and organiser of learning activities.

There is not a single definition of a good teacher. On the other hand, a teacher should have seven key competencies that are mentioned by several authors (Vašutová, 2001; Maňák et al., 2008; Beláková, 2017). Considering the classification of Beláková (2017), a teacher should have these competencies:

- subject competence – knowledge and skills in the field of content and procedural component of the subject;
- didactic and psychodidactic competence – knowledge of principles, methods, etc.;
- pedagogical competence – inner teacher's potential developed through practice and experience;
- diagnostic and interventional competence – a teacher can detect students with special needs and adapt the teaching process, etc.;
- social, psychosocial and communicative competence;
- managerial and normative competence;

- professional and personal competence.

Based on the existence of different teaching personalities and different approaches to teaching, Ivan Turek (2008) defined four different teaching styles:

- authoritative teaching style;
- democratic teaching style;
- liberal teaching style;
- indefinite teaching style.

He defined teachers who keep their distance, mostly use monologue, set the goals of the lesson without taking into consideration the opinions of students and prefer strictness and discipline in teaching as teachers with an authoritative teaching style. The exact opposites are teachers who use a democratic style. Their lessons usually contain activating methods, the opinion of students is important to them and they do self-reflection, as well as help students. Teachers with a liberal teaching style try to get closer to their students. On the other hand, they are too benevolent, which means that the atmosphere in the classroom is often very informal and the teacher is sometimes not respected by students. The last teaching style is the indefinite style, which is oscillating between authoritative, democratic and liberal style. The style mentioned above style is mostly connected with the early stages of a teacher's career. We will not deal with individual teaching styles more deeply. However, it should be emphasized that teachers are often not aware of teaching styles. They underestimate their importance, as well as do not focus on self-reflection, and very often do not know their own teaching style. That is the reason students are exposed to unilateral action very frequently.

2 The role of literature in teaching

The role of literature in Slovak language and English language teaching is different. Speaking about the role of literature in Slovak language teaching, the aim of literary education is closely related with the development of aesthetic-literary communication, as well as with the motivation of the student to read. Literature should also transform a student into a competent reader with a communicative, reading and literary competence. On the other hand, the role of literature in English language teaching has been variously interpreted over the past 100 years. Bérešová (2013) points out, that “for many language learners, reading literature is the way to deepen their understanding of life in the country whose language they are learning. The world on many books offers a full

and vivid content in which characters from many social backgrounds can be depicted. Literature is a complement to other materials used to increase the target language insight into the country whose language is being learnt.”

A competence that is closely linked to literary education is the reading competence. Reading competence is one of the basic skills that are very important for education because it enables students to obtain information and to work with information. It can be said that reading competence includes the ability to read and to read with understanding. The aim of practising reading is to develop student's specific reading sub-skills that will be used according to the situation and purpose.

The aim of literary education can be characterised as a development of the student's ability to perceive the text, interpret it, focus on important facts and parts, as well as the ability to think critically, analyse, synthesise, and evaluate the literary text, which will be connected with metatexts. Taking into consideration the point of view mentioned above, literary competence plays an important role and can be characterised as the highest competence, which leads to a cultural percipient who will successfully implement his own lifelong learning. The most basic definition of literary competence (Pršová, 2010) describes this phenomenon as understanding of a literary text, which is also associated with the formation of judgments and evaluation. A narrower definition of literary emphasises readiness to read, experience, interpret and evaluate a text, but also to benefit from that experience in one's own activity.

Magalová (2013) focuses on the aspect of interaction and defines literary competence as a result of many processes the student went through during the reading of the text. There is a double interaction: between the teacher and the student, as well as between the teacher/student and the artistic text. The first one is the didactic interaction between the teacher and the student. The second one is an aesthetic interaction, which includes a student (or teacher) and an artistic text. Their interconnection is reflected in the reading experience and the result of the interconnection mentioned above can be defined as an aesthetic-educational effect. Teaching literature includes both aesthetic and didactic interaction and goes through several phases: preparation for perception - perception - experience - rationalisation - evaluation of the text.

Comprehension of the text is one of the most important aspects of literary education. The nature of the literature is closely related with its comprehension that can be defined as an effect of the text on the recipient (Vančová, 2010). The purpose of literary education cannot be defined as

passive acceptance of literary texts or metacommunication about the texts. Literary education is characterised by understanding of artistic text and communication with them. There must be literary communication between the recipient and the literary text, thanks to which the text evokes aesthetic experience. The primary function of literature is the aesthetic function and it should not be separated from literary education.

Comprehension of a text is often associated with the ability to read aloud fluently and literary education is often based on an incorrect idea that there is a relationship between the aspects mentioned above. It must be emphasised that a well-developed ability to read aloud does not guarantee comprehension of the text, as well as insufficiently mastered reading aloud does not necessarily lead to problems in understanding. Gavora et al. emphasises that there doesn't have to be a linear relationship between reading aloud and a student's ability to understand a text. The fact that the student reads aloud fluently, that he decodes letters well and also has the appropriate pronunciation does not mean that he understands the text. The thesis about the nonlinear relationship between reading aloud and comprehension of text also has didactic consequences - too much reliance on pronunciation and fluency of reading may not improve comprehension of the text.

Passive uncritical acceptance of information cannot be characterised as an effective learning process. Learning is an active process in which it is necessary to construct meaning. From the point of view of comprehension of the text, constructivist teaching plays an important role for students. From the point of view of constructivism, it is possible to talk about understanding the text if the student is able to explain the information, use it and connect it with previous knowledge. Constructivist teaching is based on situations that correspond to the student's preconceptions. The student basically has a complex idea of the world (the so-called naive theory) in his head, representing the basis of his perception and understanding of information, which is then reconstructed through constructivist teaching. The assimilation and accommodation phases play an important role in the process of reconstruction. During the first of the phases mentioned above, the student discovers that the new information does not match their previous knowledge and then incorporates it into the existing schemes. During the accommodation phase, which represents the next step, the previous knowledge is changed (Cibáková, 2015).

Metacognitive processes play also an important role in the process of text comprehension. Development of metacognitive processes prevents stereotyped students' work and at the same time contributes to a better understanding of the text (Vančová, 2012). A student with well-developed

metacognitive processes can determine the goal of the reading, evaluate the success rate of his activity and analyse the achievement of his activity. Gavora (2015) divides metacognitive processes in the following:

- Metacognitive processes at the beginning of reading. The reader determines the goal of his reading (student's goal corresponds with the goal set by the teacher).
- Metacognitive processes during reading. They include prognosis and monitoring. The prognosis is influenced by student's prior knowledge, his ability to identify relationships between the content of the text and his knowledge, and the ability to critically evaluate variants of prognosis.
- Metacognitive processes after reading. The reader evaluates the success of his activity, decides whether the goal of the reading has been achieved (the evaluation is done by the teacher).

With the aspects mentioned above, the process of critical thinking is closely related and can be characterised as one of the priority goals at all levels of school education. Critical thinking helps not only to find employment, but it is also a determinant of better preparedness for the 21st century. Critical thinking is the ability to conceptualise, analyse, synthesise and evaluate information gathered from observation, experience, reflection, or communication.

Critical thinking allows the student to get to the heart of the matter, to go under the surface structure of the text and to develop student's analytical and evaluative cognitive processes. If the student thinks critically, he relates the information he found in the text with his own knowledge and experience. Two intertwining processes take place during this activity, the process of understanding and the process of evaluation. Both of them are characteristic of critical reading. [...] Critical thinking enables students to assess the interpretation of a text, the coherence, the reliability and credibility of the text's ideas on the basis of certain criteria. Student has the ability to solve problems, to determine the importance of information, to categorise, to compare, to integrate, to form their own opinions and judgment (Gavora, 2012).

3 Online learning

It is very important to emphasise that web-based learning/online learning/e-learning is not an absolute novelty because this way of learning was used also in previous years. Speaking about the Slovak Republic, it was only a minority way of teaching, implemented mainly in some courses or other areas of higher education. E-learning has been more intensively

used in some other countries. According to Allen and Seaman (2014), online learning has become increasingly popular in the United States over the last two decades. The institutions that provide tertiary education had already perceived this way of teaching as an important milestone in 2014. It should be emphasised that online education has become an integral part of higher education in the United States due to the accessibility of the Internet and the flexibility of the online courses.

The situation was qualitatively different in the Slovak educational area until March 2020. Online education was not a natural and inseparable part of tertiary education and it was an absolute novelty in case of primary and secondary education. Teachers and students were confronted with online learning suddenly, which led to many problematic situations, especially during the first phase of online learning from March 2020 to June 2020. School closures as a result of health and other crises are not new, at least not in the developing world, and the potentially devastating consequences are well known. Students and teachers found themselves grappling with unfamiliar conferencing technology, an experience that many found difficult to cope with. A crisis in education was caused not only by the unpreparedness of the government, but also by the unpreparedness of teachers to teach in changed conditions. Even the students themselves were not ready to be educated at home. The factors mentioned above have been complemented by insufficient technical support, both in case of students and teachers.

Online learning can be characterised by positive, as well as negative aspects. E-learning has its own specifics that made this type of learning popular during the last decade. Its implementation was mainly related to the development of information technologies but also to some of the benefits it brings. However, e-learning was not the only implemented way of teaching until 2020. Čapek (2015) presented positive aspects of e-learning:

- Flexibility that can be characterised as possibility to participate in online education anywhere.
- Lower costs, e.g. the reduction of the cost of printing materials.
- Greater currency of information related to the constant synchronisation of available resources and the presentation of the current materials.
- A higher degree of interactivity associated with a number of multimedia elements that increase the dynamics of online education.
- Improvement of skills related to the use of modern technologies.
- A minimisation of stress during the test.

Nowadays, learning has stepped into the digital world in which teaching professionals and students are connected virtually. E-learning is quite simple to understand and implement. The use of a desktop, laptop, or smartphones and the internet forms a major component of this learning methodology. E-learning provides rapid growth and seems to be the best way of teaching during the lockdown.

The revolution of information and global based availability of technology has a major impact on contemporary education. It is playing a major role in all new pedagogical skills in education at all levels. There are many available sources online to learn from wherever you need it. Digital devices and gadgets not only provide students an opportunity to engage in entertainment, but also make more opportunities for them to engage in learning activities.

Online learning is also connected with many disadvantages. There is a low level of interactivity during online lessons, which is caused by switched off cameras and microphones of students. It means that the teacher doesn't get an immediate response. What is more, physical contact disappears from the lessons. There is a decrease in motivation or absolute demotivation of students, as well as decrease in motivation of teachers. Students that are not self-disciplined, as well as not motivated and activated by an adequate amount of stimuli are very often passive and they have lack of interest in education. Tamm (2020) characterises disadvantages of e-learning as follows:

- Student feedback is limited.
- Can cause social isolation.
- Requires strong self-motivation and time management skills.
- Lack of communicational skill development.
- Cheating prevention during assessments is complicated.
- Teachers tend to focus on theory rather than practice.
- Lacks face-to-face communication.
- Is limited to certain disciplines.
- Is inaccessible to the computer illiterate population.

Taking into consideration online learning in the Slovak Republic, one of the biggest barriers can be characterised as insufficient technical equipment that causes quantitative and qualitative differences in education of students. The aspect mentioned above affects families with a low income especially. An equally important factor causing differences in education, even in the case of students who have sufficient technical equipment, is the ability of students to learn in completely different

conditions. This issue is closely related not only to the low level of motivation of students at home, but also to the low level of their attention, ability to construct knowledge by metacognitive connection of preconcepts with new knowledge and, last but not least, with insufficiently mastered learning strategies and an ability to work with textual material.

The most problematic seems to be teaching based on individual work of students, i.e. online learning supplemented by individual work of students with study materials and assignments. Focusing on the aspect mentioned above, there are significant problems in the field of metacognitive skills of students, What is more, there is also a lack of knowledge of their own learning styles visible, which brings obstacles to the knowledge acquisition and transfers responsibility to the parents of students.

Online learning requires more sophisticated interpersonal and pedagogical skills, but also computer literacy, i.e. the ability to work with information technology at a high level, to be able to prepare effective and meaningful lessons. According to Tamm (2020), the rates of computer literacy are still far from perfect. The OECD average percentage of computer literate people is around 75%, which means a quarter of the population have troubles in accessing online learning as an educational method. These numbers are connected with OECD countries that are considered developed countries with a high-income economy. As long as such gaps in society exist, online education will not be able to reach all citizens. Therefore, it is very important to look at online learning as an addition, rather than as a replacement of traditional education.

Methods and techniques that seem to be simple and practical in traditional education can be problematic in case of online learning. It can be caused by technical difficulties by their implementation. At this point, it is very important to mention group work of students and techniques that are based on the cooperation of individuals or groups. In some cases, this implementation requires mastering the advanced functions of applications, in other cases a change in the range of teaching methods and techniques.

The effectiveness of teaching is also determined by insufficient feedback, caused by switched off cameras and microphones of students, but also by the inability to monitor work of students and progress in completing assigned tasks. A lack of face-to-face communication with the students inhibits feedback, causes social isolation for both the teacher and his students, and could cause students to feel a lack of motivation and responsibility. It causes students to abandon their studies more easily In E-Learning, face-to-face communication must be substituted with other

methods and teaching techniques, e.g. video chats, discussion boards, and chatrooms could help deal with the negative effects associated with a lack of face-to-face communication during online learning.

The above-mentioned factor is closely related with two other problematic areas of e-learning. One of them can be characterised as lack of communicational skill development in online learning. Due to the lack of face-to-face communication between students and teachers, as well as due to technical difficulties connected with implementation of some methods and techniques, the students might be unable to work effectively in a team setting. It can lead to students with perfect theoretical knowledge, who will fail to pass their knowledge on to others. That is the reason peer-to-peer group activities and online lectures which require communication must be used even in an online learning environment.

The second problematic aspect is connected with teachers that tend to focus on theory rather than practice. The problem is that a planning of practically oriented online learning is very time consuming. That is the reason many teachers focus largely or entirely on developing theoretical knowledge, rather than practical skills. The reason for this is evident – theoretical lectures are considerably easier to implement in an online learning environment than practical lectures. The solution for this problem is very simple – it is important to plan online lessons very carefully and to take into consideration the importance of practicality.

All these factors create completely new conditions for education that affect not only teachers but also students and their parents. The teacher needs to adapt to the situation and at the same time to act as a motivator, facilitator, who must not only implement online teaching, but also participate in other areas of online education, and all without initial experience. The role of students is to learn in new conditions, many times without sufficient technical support, as well as without a great amount of stimuli. It leads not only to problems in the field of theoretical knowledge, but also to apathy and reluctance to work.

4 Methods and techniques suitable for online learning

Teaching methods and techniques represent an important unit in the educational process. Aspects, such as the need to focus attention on the student, increase his/her interest in school and subject by transforming education into a positive experience, as well as the need to prepare the student for life by linking theoretical knowledge to practical use are areas that are in focus of many researchers nowadays. In connection with the aspects mentioned above, the focus of the discussions is centralised to the choice of appropriate teaching methods and techniques that will respond to students' needs, as well as to the necessity of

continuous change of education. Teaching techniques play a very important role in the educational process. Selection of teaching methods and techniques, which depends on the teacher's teaching style as well as the learning style of students, but also subsequent use of the teaching techniques affect the educational process, the activity of the teacher and the students as well as their interaction. The choice of teaching techniques affects also the motivation of the students, their desire to acquire new knowledge, and finally the way of achieving the objectives and goals of the lesson. It is important to choose a range of teaching methods and techniques, which not only positively affect the activity of students and their motivation, but also support the development of their cognitive skills.

In connection with primary and secondary education, it is emphasised that the necessity to find new, innovative, modern techniques, reflects the needs of 21st century students. "Innovation is needed to increase the efficiency of the educational process so that the educational process is in accord with the latest knowledge about it. [...] However, the issue of innovation in contemporary didactics is not only about finding something new, but also about the way, how to transfer what has been described as innovative to the real educational process" (Petlák, 2012).

The choice of teaching methods and techniques is determined by the teacher. He is not only an embodiment of extensive knowledge, but he is, among other roles, the organiser of the teaching unit, motivator, who is responsible for motivation of students, and mentor helping to develop learning strategies, cognitive and metacognitive skills, as well as critical thinking of students.

From the point of view of suitability for online learning, there is a classification of teaching techniques based on the principles of ERR framework:

1. Evocation:

A. Brainstorming activities:

- free writing;
- question generator;
- questionstorming;
- one minute paper;
- value scales;
- five questions;
- clustering;
- Phillips 66;
- rolestorming.

B. Games:

- who am I?

- guess what I'm drawing;
- crossword;
- quiz;
- escape room;
- online games.

2. Realisation of meaning:

- skimming;
- scanning;
- reading with questions;
- KWL;
- mirror reading;
- visual imagery;
- SQ4R;
- PQRSST;
- INSERT;
- double entry diary;
- guided reading;
- literature circle;
- jumbled sentences.

3. Reflection:

A. Compositional creative writing techniques:

- story map;
- picture stories;
- RAFT;
- 5W (who, what, where, when, why);
- role on the wall;
- mind map;
- concept map.

B. Group work techniques:

- expert groups;
- six thinking hats;
- round table;
- devil's advocate;
- snowball.

C. Drama techniques:

- role play;
- dramatisation of the text;
- hot chair;
- pantomime.

D. Didactic games:

- online game;
- domino;
- who am I?;
- what was in the picture;
- flashcards;
- escape room;
- Kahoot!

As it was stated in previous parts, selection of teaching methods and techniques affects the educational process, the activity of the teacher and the students as well as their interaction. The choice of teaching techniques affects also the motivation of the students, their desire to acquire new knowledge, and finally the way of achieving objectives and goals of the lesson. In this context is very important to say, that the difference between the older generations and the younger generation is significant. The difference is much more visible than in the case of previous generations. The current young generation, often described as Generation Z, is confronted with an absolutely different reality than the previous generations. The present-day reality is influenced by rapidly evolving information and communication technologies that are changing the way young people process information, participate in teaching and access to learning. Members of the Generation Z are characterised by the ability to use modern technical and communication tools in a natural way, which affects the nature of their communication and approach to education. The concentration of the Generation Z is lower or qualitatively different and the attention of young people is divided between teaching, social networks and the opportunities the internet offers.

The aspects mentioned above are reflected in all levels of education. The teachers have to struggle with the problems. A good teacher of the 21st century needs to find ways to motivate students, to maintain their attention and to develop their competencies and critical thinking. That is the reason the focus of discussions is centralised on the selection of appropriate teaching methods and procedures that will correspond to the needs of students, not only at primary but also at secondary levels of education.

5 How to teach literature online

Online learning has specific features that distinguish this way of teaching from a lesson in a classroom. Nowadays, learning has stepped into the digital world in which teaching professionals and students are

virtually connected (Pokrivčáková, 2017). E-learning is quite simple to understand and implement. The use of a desktop, laptop, or smartphones and the internet forms a major component of this learning methodology. E-learning provides rapid growth and seems to be the best way of teaching during lockdown.

There are five important aspects to consider when running a virtual classroom with a young audience (Maes, 2020):

- To maintain the rhythm and rituals of the class. It is not important, whether the rituals are gestural or verbal, whether they start or interrupt activity. The rituals support the dynamism in a class. If we speak about the little learners, it is important to create a sense of security during an online lesson.
- To implement activities that interrupt teaching: songs, rhymes, mimes, etc. The teacher should adjust rituals and games according to the chosen teaching goals, methods and techniques: welcoming rituals, quizzes, a mascot that helps the teacher to change activity, etc.
- To support oral and written interaction to maintain dynamics in the group.
- To adjust the length of activities: online learning should consist of shorter activities that keep students' attention. It is important to diversify activities and to use various tools (padlet for writing together, flashcards, etc.). A good teacher should be able to predict the time of each activity.
- To prefer asynchronous classes with video capsules. In case of older students, we can focus on a specific skill.

As was mentioned in previous parts, it is important to diversify teaching methods, techniques and activities, as well as to use various tools to keep students' attention. One of the best ways to keep students' attention seems to be implementation of didactic games. Language games develop specific language skills and can be used to fix the acquired knowledge. Students practice correct pronunciation and grammatical aspects of language. From the point of view of literary games, students acquire the values that are necessary for the formation of their personality. Along with emotional aspect, they discover the beauty of language, actively improve their communicative skills and regulate their behaviour. Didactic games increase the attractiveness of the educational process, as well as improve the relationship between the teacher and students. They also improve the relationship to learning and the acquired knowledge is more permanent (Porubcová, 1996).

From the point of view of suitability for online learning, online didactic games and activities seem to be the best choice. Very popular are especially platforms such as escape rooms, Kahoot quizzes, Baamboozle, Jeopardy, Wordwall, Flippity, Learninggaps, Genially, Padlet, Hot Potatoes, Nearpod, etc. The use of these tools is often limited due to lack of time or insufficient experience of teachers. The challenge is that many professors lack the opportunity, experience, or understanding to utilise digital games within their classrooms. Becker (2007) notes that instructors cannot be expected to embrace games as a tool for learning unless they have a sound understanding of the potential of games and the confidence in their abilities to employ them.

Kahoot!

Kahoot! can be used as a supplemental teaching tool in classes no larger than 30 students. Teachers use Kahoot! to create game based quizzes, discussions, and surveys. At the beginning, teachers register for a free account by going to <https://kahoot.com>. Students sign in using the web address <https://kahoot.it> to access the platform. Kahoot! can be used with smartphones, tablets, or laptop computers. Students can choose one device per person or select team mode to use one device per team.

Instructional experts Gagne & Driscoll (1988) explain that one of the first elements needed for learning is to gain students' attention. The music, colours, and excitement brought by Kahoot! encourage student focus and can excite a classroom. Kapp (2012) states that a successful educational game needs to have the right context, the right cognitive activities, meaningful challenges, and feedback. Kapp (2012) concludes that the "gamification" of education supports learning and knowledge acquisition.

The implementation of a Kahoot! platform has advantages, as well as disadvantages. From the point of view of advantages, it is important to focus on the ability to download, review, and save students' results. A "ghost mode" feature allows students to take quizzes multiple times and compete against themselves for better scores. Last but not least, Kahoot! platform allows teachers to adjust the response time from 5 seconds to 120 seconds.

There are also some disadvantages about which teachers and students should know. There is a limit on the number of characters you can use in questions and responses and what is more, teachers cannot ask open-ended questions or receive open-ended responses.

Escape rooms

Escape rooms belong to the newest trends in language teaching. The premise is relatively simple: players must complete a series of tasks in order to gain passwords, retrieve clues, or gather other information needed to “escape the room”. In recent years, there has been a global renaissance of interest in flexible and lifewide forms of education. Escape rooms represent a form of game, involving innovative learner-focused activities. Escape rooms first appeared in Japan in 2007 and have spread rapidly, mainly since 2012, to many countries in Asia, Europe, and the U.S.A. These games have incorporated technology, thus, providing virtual reality experiences and their utilisation has expanded to places beyond entertainment, such as education. Escape rooms are a type of game involving lifelong challenges, using puzzles, which are to be solved by a team in a limited amount of time and are accessible to many age groups and educational environments. They are usually themed-based and sometimes driven by a narrative where gamers are engaged in a role play (Nicholson, 2018).

It is important to say that escape rooms require teamwork, communication, and skills such as critical thinking, attention to detail, and rational thinking to apply a wide range of knowledge and the appropriate methods under time pressure. The main benefits of such games are that they promote collaboration, develop problem-solving strategies, critical thinking, and creativity.

Conclusion

The educational process can be implemented in various ways. It only depends on the teachers to decide which of the ways they are going to choose. However, it is important to say that traditional education, which was built on the principles of the positivist model for years, loses its position due to social changes in recent years. Emphasis is placed on the innovation of education, based on the principles of constructivism and critical thinking as the key areas of modern didactics. The aim of literary education is closely related with development of the student's ability to perceive the text, interpret it, focus on important facts and parts, as well as the ability to think critically, analyse, synthesise, and evaluate the literary text, which will be connected with metatexts. Innovative teaching methods and techniques that stimulate cognitive processes such as analysis, synthesis, and assessment appear to be the most effective in these intentions.

The need for a completely different approach to education became even more important during the year 2020 because the pandemic crisis of

COVID-19 changed the ways of teaching. E-learning has become an obligatory component of all educational institutions like schools and universities around the world. E-learning is quite simple to understand and implement. On the other hand, it is very important to take into consideration problematic spheres of online learning. The teachers have to struggle with the problems. A good teacher of the 21st century needs to find ways to motivate students, to maintain their attention and to develop their competencies and critical thinking.

All these factors create completely new conditions for education that affect not only teachers but also students and their parents. The teacher needs to adapt to the situation and at the same time to act as a motivator, facilitator, who must not only implement online teaching, but also participate in other areas of online education, and all without initial experience. This paper tries to help teachers and future teachers to overcome obstacles, to improve their knowledge in the field of online learning, as well as tries to contribute to the solution of the unfavourable situation in the field of online literature teaching.

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