

Book review: *Into the classroom: Literature*

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This new title, *Literature* is a new addition to the recent Oxford University Press 'Into the Classroom' series. Other titles include, for example, *Bringing extensive reading into the classroom*, *Mixed ability teaching*, and *Bringing technology into the classroom*. The co-writers of the present text are Amos Paran and Pauline Robinson, experienced and long-serving language teachers and researchers who are both based in the UK. The former has recently been interviewed for *The Language Teacher*, issue 41.2, by Simon Bibby (the present reviewer) and Anna Husson Isozaki.

The text is comprised of three sections. The first section 'Establishing the groundwork' (units 1-3) offers the reader a general introduction to using literature in the language classroom. The first unit therein looks at literature, and considers the nature of what we may think of as literary language. The second unit looks at different approaches for using literature in language classrooms. The third unit discusses how language students may respond to the use of literature, including consideration of relevant aspects such as background knowledge and intertextual knowledge. The second section (units 4-7), 'Working with literary genres' looks at four genres of literature respectively; short stories, poetry, novels and then drama. The third and final section 'Working with related genres' (units 8-9) considers connections between other creative art forms, notably paintings, music and film.

Comparing with previous leading texts in the area of literature in language teaching, this text leans more toward the approach of Sage's (1997) 'Incorporating Literature in ESL Instruction', now sadly out of print, than Brumfit and Long's (1986) 'Literature in Language Teaching' and Hall's (2015, 2nd edition) 'Literature in Language Education', in offering a more directly user-friendly, accessible and practical approach. Clearly, the text is not written to be an 'academic' tome, but as a hands-on guide for teachers interested in using literature in their classrooms, with ease of use in mind.

Noting this robustly practical approach, the book is well-designed, well-structured and an

easy read. The tone adopted is that of a helpful and friendly senior colleague. The distinct parts and units, then of further subsections, break up the text conveniently, making it easy to dip into and speedy to find what one is interested in. A glossary is provided at the back, plus a list of suggested websites to use to gather literary materials to use. Too often, language texts for both teachers and students are unduly cluttered, whereas the A4 size format here allows for plenty of white space, considerably adding to the user-friendliness. Icons are employed in left margins throughout, for example a pointy finger alongside 'Try this' and a check mark for 'Getting it right', which further direct the reader-user. Oddly omitted however is an initial key for this, which may help to initially situate the reader -- it is not difficult to understand, but it is always helpful to make the approach and the reasoning behind this explicit. This minor suggested shortcoming aside, the overall print design is superior to that usually found in such teacher guide series, for which the authors and publishing house are to be commended.

This is certainly a book for teachers rather than academic researchers, and in that regard is a welcome and effective addition to anyone's 'literature in language teaching' library. Overall, this reviewer can recommend the present 'Into the classroom: Literature' text to more seasoned users of literature in their classrooms, to those looking to get underway, and to all those of us somewhere along this spectrum. The former group will likely benefit from picking up some new approaches to using literature, from examples of texts to use across differing genres, and how to use these new texts. As an example, I particularly appreciated the 'literature art and music' section, and the discussion of how to interlink creative genres within classes. For teachers considering adding something new and literary to their pedagogical armory, this text offers an ideal starting point.

References

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Appendix A: Literature (OUP: ISBN 9-780194-427524)

