

Book title

Drafts, Slippers and Mother in Law
(Chasing a Croatian girl)

Author

Cody McClain Brown



Bibliographic information

Publisher: Algoritam
Translation to Croatian: Vladimir Cvetković Sever
06/2014.
186 str., oft cover
ISBN 9789533167749

Links (adaptations, reviews, full texts etc.)

<http://www.ziher.hr/recenzija-propuh-papuce-i-punica-sarmanzni-zapisi-o-slatkom-hrvatskom-zivotu/>

<http://www.najboljeknjige.com/content/knjiga.aspx?BookID=2290&tab=2>

<http://citajme.com/propuh-papuce-punica/>

<http://www.algoritam.hr/download/poglavlja/164657.pdf>

<https://blog.hrt.hr/248968/cody-brown/moj-propuh-papuce-i-punica>

<http://www.ziher.hr/intervju-cody-mcclain-brown-kako-je-od-propuha-papuca-i-punice-nastala-knjiga/>



<https://net.hr/danas/hrvatska/oni-to-jednostavno-ne-razumiju-ovih-5-hrvatskih-obicaja-ameri-nikako-ne-mogu-shvatiti/>

http://www.gkm.hr/propuh_papuce_i_punica.html

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Wq222l1ku>

Theme

The book is a result of blogger texts about the cultural differences between The United States and Croatia that follow the author (evolution from stranger to son in law) together with judgements, stereotypes, traditions and beliefs.

Short summary

Meeting his future wife, a Croatian who he met in a town in Oklahoma, the author because of love decides to move to Croatia, first to Split and then to Zagreb. Arriving in new surroundings, so different to the one in America, the author goes through a cultural shock. He doesn't understand the traditions, doesn't know the culture and mentality of the people he meets. He fights against the judgments and stereotypes and compared the Croatian and American lifestyle. Although he will never understand why Croatians are so afraid of the fresh air they call draft, why drinking coffee takes hours and what is its social role, the importance of the relationship with your neighbors, why you aren't allowed to walk bare feet, who's the mother in law and what is her role and other life circumstances, a Croatian son in law will still get drunk wishing his daughter the American dream.

Why is the story appropriate for the targeted groups of RSP readers?

- Was created as a result of blogs talking about the everyday lives of foreign people living in Croatia, written in a simple conversational language.
- In a funny and interesting way it talks about how the two cultures clash and meet.
- It raises general human questions such as, language misunderstanding, feeling of exclusion, (not) acceptance in a new surroundings, and not knowing the culture and how to fit in it.

What are the distinguished readers' interests reflected by this book/story?

The readers see and analyze the Croatian society and put themselves in the



prospective of a foreigner. With the ability to compare the two different cultures they can distinguish their values and disadvantages, but also learn and accept what is different to what they know.

Why is this story motivational for the pupils?

The readers can identify with the author, narrator and main character. Considering that young people today, in the time of globalization are always in contact with people from different surrounding, cultures and orientations. From everyday examples they are able to recognize and acknowledge the importance of understanding others. Also, the students can perceive their society and everything else from a foreigner's point of view. The simple writing style and humor make for a readable and fun book.

Is there a historical, political, multi/inter cultural, migrant or similar context recognized in this book/story?

In the book, we can recognize the intercultural context - with a personal example from the author, he explains that conventions do not function the same way towards the two societies. Stereotypes can be an obstacle in communication, and cause intercultural misunderstandings which bring positive and negative emotions, (humor, surprise, discomforts etc.). In the same way the author does not understand Croatian traditions (ex. Invite to lunch and paying the bill or having good neighbor relationships, which he considers being nosy and intrusion of privacy), which raises the previously mentioned emotions – firstly disbelief and discomfort, then surprise and relief and ultimately pleasure.

Is there a principle of inclusion reflected in this book/story and does it promote understanding of cultural diversities and heritage?

Yes, and American is trying to fit in the Croatian society and is doing a pretty good job at it, but he had preconditions, the preconditions were to meet, understand and accept the cultural differences and heritage. The book brings awareness to the reader that stereotypes and judgment do exist about Croatians too, just as Croatians do the same for other nations.



METHODOLOGY

Title of Activity

Prejudice and stereotypes

Description of educational activity

Duration: 2 x 45 minutes

Student age: 17 – 18 (Junior year)

Student class organization: group work

Lecture goal:

To encourage the development of cultural understanding and breaking stereotypes and prejudices

Developing empathy

Supporting materials

- Internet
- Teaching leaflets
- Croatian phraseological dictionary

Highlights:

- 3 texts
- sticky notes

Activity:

reading, interpreting, and discussing the text



I. Activity before reading

Allows for motivation, sharing of personal impressions, and group cohesion

Students are divided into groups of four. Every group get one task

a) Prejudices

Examine photographs of famous people that are somehow attached to specific prejudice and individually answer question related to their unknown side of life

Example:

What does the owner of Amazon ride, the richest man on the world?

What is the IQ of once the most beautiful blond Sharon Stone?

What is the profession of Zvonimir Boban, captain of the bronze soccer team in 1998?

(Honda accord, built in 1999., member of Mense, IQ 154, history teacher)

Discuss the answers together and compare them with the correct information provided. Explain why certain prejudice emerged when mentioning these famous people.

b) Ethnic stereotypes

Together explain the following ethnic stereotypes: act like an English man, correct as a Swiss watch, every gipsy praises his horse, there are as much as the Chinese, valuable as Japanese.

Individually suggest examples from everyday life about ethnic negative stereotypes and together try to break them.

c) How do I feel

Look at the pictures and individually describe a similar personal experience and the emotions that came with it.





Presentation of group results and short discussion.

II. Activities during and after reading in groups.

Groups receive parts of the text and class leaflets (every group reads their given part)

a) 1st chapter – Croatia: Where Russia is not, str. 10 - 11

The underlying task:

What does the sentence mean: We are situated between two huge oceans and we are just prone to placing everything on the other side somewhere over there.

What are the author's opinions about spaces and people 'somewhere over there'? What are the Croatian views about Americans? Explore the meaning of the terms Cold War, Bipolar Political World, Iron Curtain and explain them in the context of fragmentation.

Analysis: stereotypes and Prejudices; attitude towards the unknown

b) 12th Chapter - Neighbors, pg. 82 – 86

The underlying task :

Compare the American phrase: 'good fences make good neighbors', with the Croatian version 'thin walls, hallways full of echo and open windows make good neighbors.'

Explain the sentence 'It sounds crays, and annoying, but comforting to know that people know who you are, what's happening in your life and if any help is needed.' What are the differences between life in a community and life on a separate small island?

Analysis: cultural differences; community and individuality; alienation

c) 23rd chapter – Sharing a bill, pg. 144 – 145

The underlying task:



What stops the author not to enjoy lunch? Why does he come with such beliefs?
Examine the sentence 'The board in me just flipped, everything just went blank, the music stopped and I am in shock.'

Analysis: beliefs; cultural differences; prejudices and stereotypes

III. Common activities after reading

Presenting group work results.

Dramatic methods

- a) The Hot Stool: the group is examining a participants life, behavior, and motivation (Possible questions: How do you feel in the new environment? What people's actions make you feel uncomfortable in your environment? What behavior do you not understand?)
- b) The Rashomon effect – a hot stool variant – every character tells the story based on his/her experience (possible questions: fitting in a new environment; social events; interpersonal relationships etc. - talks from the writers perspective, wife's, neighbors and acquaintances ...)

Evaluation and Assessment Method:

Professors Role - Prepare Materials and Act as a Moderator

Evaluation of group work - questionnaire: evaluation and self-evaluation

Students are assessed on the basis of their abilities:

- Reading with understanding and recognition of cultural differences, stereotypes and prejudices
- Participation in a argued discussion
- presentation of group work - systematic and structured presentation



The Impact of Activity on Reading RSP:

The activities encourage the development of empathy and tolerance of the student, understanding differences and accepting different cultural concepts and thus breaking stereotypes and prejudice.

Connection to curriculum

Grade: 3rd (junior year)

Curriculum:

Linguistic Expression - Formation of Expression

Ethics

English language

Geography

Sociology

Knowledge:

- better understanding of yourself and the world
- recognition and acceptance of others and their cultural characteristics
- critical thinking about the world, family, values, customs, cultural differences, stereotypes, and prejudices
- enjoying the experience of reading world literature

Skills:

- collection, selection and evaluation of information
- reading, interpreting and evaluating literary texts

Competence:

- communication competences
- ability to work in a team, and acceptance of someone different

Knowledge:

- better understanding of yourself and the world around you
- Critical thinking about the world, society, religion
- Enjoyable reading experience

Skills:

- collection, selection and evaluation of information
- reading, interpreting and evaluating literary texts



Competence:

- communication competences
- intercultural competences
- ability to work in a team, and acceptance of someone different

Bibliographic reference to be used during the activity

Cody McClain Brown, Draft, Slipper and mother in Law

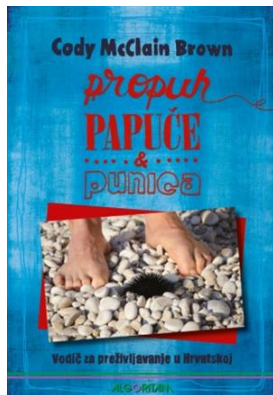
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Results

Expected outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- express opinions clearly and reasonably as well as actively listen to others
- recognize and understand cultural differences

Recommendations

The work is appropriate for students because it speaks about topics close to them and enables them to have a better cultural understanding and insight into different perceptions of social norms, customs and values. The theme and simple writing style makes it easy to understand and encourage them to read the continuation of the book (Croatia hits back) or similar works.