

Introduction

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This issue of *Revista Acolhendo* continues the journal's established tradition of focusing on issues related to literacy in its many forms. In doing so, it provides links between these issues of literacy and the challenges of teaching practices in a range of contexts. In addition, the articles stimulate thinking not only about pedagogical approaches and philosophies, but also about the cultural and social settings in which these approaches and philosophies are enacted and the need to broaden understandings of these settings. The theme of literacy therefore resonates in a variety of interesting and provocative ways throughout the articles of this issue. Readers from different educational levels and contexts will appreciate the attention paid to important aspects of literacy development in schools and their surrounding communities.

The opening contribution, an interview with Quebec author Patrick Senécal conducted by Nilce da Silva, explores the appeal of Senécal's work for adolescents. The interview reveals Senécal's notion that adolescents may be particularly drawn to stories like his that are highly dramatic and lend themselves well to cinematography. The interview leads effectively into the subsequent articles on literacy.

Two articles draw on experiencing stories in literacy activities used to promote cultural understanding. Soares writes about an attempt to make the connections between Brazil and Angola through children's stories in a private school kindergarten class in Sao Paulo, highlighting the similarities that exist across different cultural contexts. In a related article, Kozaka, Souza and Bulla report on their attempt to use dramatized stories to expand the connection between certain African cultures and Brazilian students,

basing an activity involving students and teachers in a public school in Sao Paulo on Silva's idea of "creative space."

A further set of two articles focuses more specifically on literacy instruction against a theoretical background of constructivism. Gurgel, de Jesus and Nogueira propose a program of professional development for student teachers based on case studies of five public school teachers in the city of Salvador. Their proposal identifies themes deemed essential in teacher knowledge of literacy practices. Responding to media speculation about a constructivist approach being responsible for the failure of literacy education in Brazilian schools and the accompanying impetus to return to traditional methods of instruction, Bona Josefi reports on a study of discussions among literacy teachers following a professional development project. The results of the study suggest that a misunderstanding of constructivist concepts may have contributed to the problems in the teaching of literacy.

The remaining articles continue the exploration of literacy both within and outside of Brazil. Yamin and Mello studied the life circumstances and literacy development of students in a settlement camp and their related expectations about schooling. Silva, Deslandes and Rousseau compare parental involvement in their children's homework in both Brazil and Quebec, noting the differences in parental motivations as a result of differences in context, and the resulting links to literacy. In a further article by Ventura, numeracy and numerical language are discussed in terms of their power to explain contemporary social reality.

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