

Editorial

The sixth number of the *Latin-American Journal of Astronomy Education* (RELEA) is special and significant under different aspects.

For the first time we publish contributions presented at a meeting. Not only that. In the present edition we feature works done by high-school teachers. This is an improvement, in the sense that we are achieving the inclusion of part of the public to which the journal is targeted, but whose participation up to now was absent as authors.

One of the reasons for this absence – also present in other publications of science education in general- is due to the simple fact that an educator is not trained as a researcher. One of the consequences of this distortion is his/her lack of familiarity with the format of specialized publications, in spite of he/she being, most of the times, the final target to which those publications should be directed to. Therefore, it is very gratifying – and also an editorial challenge- to have them in this edition as authors of works in astronomy education.

The published articles were selected by the Editors of the RELEA among the 8 works on education presented in the *I Encontro Internacional de Astronomia e Astronáutica*, held in Campos dos Goytacazes (RJ), between May 2 and 4, 2008. Thus, this special issue does not correspond to the Proceedings of that meeting. Among the presented works, the present publication contains only those that passed the refereeing process.

We point out to the readers that in this issue, and exceptionally, we have modified the refereeing procedures to act ourselves, the Editors, as referees for all works. We made this decision because of the particular features of this meeting, which appeared to us suitable for a selected papers volume not having the technical standards usually published by our journal. This is why the style of the papers, some considerations about theoretical frameworks or methodological in nature, among other things, do not generally follow the pattern commonly found in the scientific education literature. However, we believe that the purposes and quality of the authors, combined with the novel character of this initiative, support our decision. All the involved in this area will benefit from the present publication, and the RELEA reinforces with it the aim of stimulate the research and outreach activities in this area, including the support to the realization of this kind of meetings.

The emphasis of the selected works is on development. Because of the lack of tradition and forum for this type of publications, they are still in the first or intermediate stages of development. However, when we assumed the publication of this volume, we also targeted the advance and systematization of the scientific production in the area by the very educators involved in the reality of everyday formal school education.

What follows is a representative sample of *what* – and *how*- a part of the community working in astronomy education in Brazil is thinking of its professional activity.

More information about the RELEA and instructions for the authors can be found at the address: www.astro.iag.usp.br/~foton/relea/index.html. The manuscripts can be written in Portuguese, Spanish or English.

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(P.S.B.) and to Prof. Marcelo de Oliveira Souza, chairman of the *I Encontro Internacional de Astronomia e Astronáutica* for the encouragement to the authors for the preparation of the works. We also acknowledge Miss Rosemeire Zambini for the editing of the articles, the referees and all those who, in some way or another, helped us to continue with this project, and in particular with the preparation of this issue.

Editors

Paulo S. Bretones

Luiz C. Jafelice

Jorge E. Horvath