

Editorial

This seventh issue of the Latin-American Journal of Astronomy Education (RELEA) comes in a special moment, since the XXVII General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union has just happened in Rio de Janeiro last August. In addition, we are still celebrating the International Astronomical Year.

Several education experiences were presented in that event, as well as in other satellite events being held in Brazil and many other countries.

As an example, several international projects were presented at the IAU with the aim of improving the popularization of astronomy, quantitatively and qualitatively. They merit serious study concerning their scope and efficiency for education, besides their popularization goals.

The RELEA was much advertised during the IAU event. We hope that this fact can result in a deepening of the discussions on astronomy education and the growth of the submitted papers from different countries, as stated in the main goals of the RELEA.

In this issue three papers are published.

Instrumentation for Astronomy Teaching: Projecting the Sun Image, by Francisco Catelli, Odilon Giovannini, Osvaldo Balen and Fernando Siqueira da Silva. In this work, a simple optical device is described, suitable however for the observations of solar eclipses and estimates of the sizes of sunspots.

Astronomy Teaching and Teachers Continuing Education: The Interdisciplinarity During a Total Lunar Eclipse, by Rodolfo Langhi. This text describes how a group of 67 professors, belonging to 23 different cities, were able to awake in their students the scientific interest using a natural astronomical phenomenon: a total lunar eclipse. The event was preceded by preparation meetings of continuous formation, in which the interdisciplinarity of astronomy and the importance of observing the phenomena were stressed. Working groups were formed of professors and students for a joint data acquisition during the eclipse, and for the interaction with the local communities. The results point to some paths that can bring motivation and scientific culture through the approach between the scientific, amateur and school communities.

The Universe in a Box: Introduction to the Study of Astronomy in the Initial Formation of Physics Teachers, by Marcos Daniel Longhini. About the description of an activity of introduction of astronomy performed with a future physics teachers group in a Brazilian public university.

That activity had as a goal to highlight the notions of spatiality, alternative conceptions of the participants and the process of peer interaction, and consisted of a three-dimensional representation of the universe models the participants had in mind. The results -categorized as miscellaneous, geocentric, heliocentric and centerless- were qualitatively analyzed. The analysis of the activity as seen by the participants are pointed out, and also their employment as a resource for the teaching of astronomy addressed.

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

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