

A B S T R A C T S

**Alphabetization
in contexts of exclusion**

ANA MARÍA MÉNDEZ PUGA

The discussion about the relationship between poverty / exclusion and the fact of not being alphabetized or not having a basic education is a topic that has been much debated already, but is not for that reason less valid. The thoughts this article presents include the topic of the relative failure of alphabetization and basic education programs for youths and adults in Latin America; this discussion is based on some non-alphabetized people, children who do not attend school and those who are expelled. The differences between some campaigns and initiatives are summarily commented on, and in closing some elements are described which will allow for the construction of more consistent proposals for the alphabetization of adults, most of which emerge from the texts that form part of this issue of *Decisio*.

**Reading practices
in the alphabetization
of youths and adults:
¿What needs to be learned
and what needs to be done?**

CLÁUDIA LEMOS VÓVIO

Reading, way of reading and the objects related to writing acquire very diverse meanings according to the situations in which people interact and appropriate those cultural goods. Reading is presented in this article as an object produced within and as a result of the relationships among human groups, in specific social moments and spaces. This has implications for the educational practices that are carried out in alphabetization groups. One of the consequences of this approach is the widening of the reading horizon, that is to say, the consideration of a great variety of objects, forms of reading, behaviors, gestures and tastes related to this activity. This article deals with reading practices that are generally invisible, as well as a great number of voices and discourses not socially recognized.

**Alphabetization:
Theory and practice**

GREGORIO HERNÁNDEZ ZAMORA

The term “alphabetization” constitutes a platform for discussion and debate concerning what it means to be alphabetized, what it means to know or not know how to read and write, what level of skill is acceptable, whether alphabetization must be used to function in or out of school, which alphabetization approach is best and who decides what counts as alphabetization, who needs alphabetization, and what kind of alphabetization they need. This article exposes in a simple form some definitions and current theoretical debates on the concept of alphabetization. With that purpose some common misunderstandings are dealt with, focusing as well on some points of agreement and divergence. The distinctions between three dimensions of alphabetization (functional, cultural and critical) are exposed in a “didactical” form, and the critical dimension is treated in depth. In closing, some implications and recommendations for action are presented.

Families and written culture
Approaches to daily domestic and
scholastic situations

LAURA MARÍA OMINETTI

International organizations advocate the need of developing alphabetization activities for children and adults in school and beyond it. This article intends to account for some thoughts and proposals for action concerning the existing bond between families, schools and written culture, which arise out of two research projects developed at the Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades, Universidad Nacional of Cordoba, Argentina. It approaches the problems of the existing bonds between elementary schools for children and youths and families integrated by adults with null, interrupted or deferred scholastic formation, immersed in urban and rural contexts. It also intends to account for written culture resources present in the daily lives of families, as well as those specifically related to schools.

A task to be learned:
**Alphabetization of young and
adult indigenous people**

SARA ELENA MENDOZA ORTEGA

Given the importance of alphabetization for the improvement of the living conditions of people and marginalized communities, this article approaches the learning of reading and writing skills in indigenous populations, with particular attention given to the implementation of the indigenous alphabetization program by the Instituto Nacional de los Adultos (INEA) in the Mayan peninsula in Mexico. Some problems and tendencies in the current practices of indigenous alphabetization that gave rise to the construction of this proposal are described, and the model in question is analyzed. Finally, the learning experiences and challenges obtained from this task are recovered in order to outline some recommendations for action in the domain of alphabetization and basic education of the indigenous population.

**Alphabetization
of adult foreign immigrants:**

Alphabetizing in a language
they don't understand

FÉLIX DELGADO PÉREZ

The massive arrival of foreign immigrants in Spain and the educational demand this creates have placed this country in need of revising methodologies, strategies and concepts that refer to the alphabetization of adults. Arising from that phenomenon, the concept of alphabetization, traditionally conceived of as the process of acquisition of reading and writing techniques in a language that is possessed in its oral manifestation, is now presented as a more global, more integrated proposal. It is not about learning how to read and write, but about grasping a language that is unknown and that becomes manifest through sounds and letters. Alphabetization as an integrated, undifferentiated process in the learning of a language implies a global process, where sounds, letters and meaning form a whole that students must learn how to relate and identify at the same time.

**Alphabetizers:
A hope for adult education**

MARÍA LETICIA GALVÁN SILVA

The social construction of alphabetizers is a scarcely approached topic despite the importance it should have in the definition of their education and to improve the quality of their work. This article is the product of a research carried out in the region of Patzcuaro, Mexico, with alphabetizers (mostly women) from three different government programs. Based on documental research and the discourse of alphabetizers, the elements that conform their personal and professional profiles are exposed, among them solidarity, volunteerism and non remuneration, aspects that define the teaching work in alphabetization.

**Alphabetization
beyond the a,b,c's**

LOURDES ARAVEDO RESÉNDIZ

The search for pedagogical alternatives that improve the teaching and learning of reading and writing skills is a topic that, far from becoming worn, acquires greater importance as the results of traditional alphabetization processes frequently meet neither the expectations of those who design them nor of the receivers. The article is based on the research carried out by the author between July and December 1995 with a group of women of low or no education, inhabitants of a poor area in Mexico City. The experience was based on the use of flexible procedures that took as a starting point the knowledge, interests, needs and expectations of the person who learns, and that promote the comprehension of words within a text, the production of written language in different kinds of texts, and the participation in daily activities in which written language has an actual use.

"So that you don't be misled"
The social value of
school in rural Mexico

SUSAN MEYERS

A recent nine-month field research study in the small town of Villachuato explores the value systems surrounding literacy in rural Mexico. Whereas teachers assume that formal education is the most important means to personal growth and economic advancement, students and their parents feel at odds with formal education. This article outlines a conflict that seems to exist between schools and the communities that they serve in rural areas of Mexico. Specifically, community members in Villachuato regard schooled knowledge primarily as a means to self-defense in an increasingly bureaucratic world; and they experience higher levels of education as a result of economic success, rather than a cause. These results have implications for teachers who work with students in rural areas of Mexico, or who work with students who have migrated from such areas. Broadly speaking, teachers need to be aware of the ways that these students value education, which may indeed be different from the values emphasized in formal institutions like public schools.

Alphabetization in Michoacan and Oaxaca (Mexico):

Teachings from the “Yo sí puedo”

ANA MARÍA MÉNDEZ PUGA

In 2006, by the initiative of UNESCO, a case study about the Cuban method of alphabetization “Yes I can” was carried out in three countries in Latin America, among them, Mexico. The article approaches the results of a study carried out in Oaxaca and Michoacan during which coordinators, facilitators and students in the alphabetization groups were interviewed, as well as graduates. Besides the interviews, observations were made and tests applied to evaluate learning. One of the main conclusions was the need to avoid focusing effort in an educational program on the method, since success achieved is due to other factors, such as the work of teachers and their commitment or to the motivation of participants themselves, and in especially to educational continuity.

Questioning as a mediating tool in the alphabetization processes of youths and adults

MARÍA ALEJANDRA BOWMAN

The teacher represents the main mediating figure in the processes of acquisition of written language, therein the importance of analyzing that role. This article analyzes the forms and implications of the questions formulated by the teachers in contexts of alphabetization of youths and adults who attend two elementary schools in Cordoba, Argentina, with very diverse knowledge and life paths. For this article three categories were selected, which were considered as part of the *oral resources* used by the teachers in alphabetization processes of youths and adults: Questioning as a form of evaluation, “open” questioning and interpolating questioning.

Traducido por Camilo Patiño

Agradecemos a Catherine R. Ettinger la corrección de la traducción.

“Es mejor saber
después de haber
pensado y discutido
que aceptar los saberes
que nadie discute
para no tener
que pensar”

Fernando Savater
Filósofo español, 1947