

Editorial

This twelfth edition of the journal Latin American Astronomy Education (RELEA) is significant for several reasons.

We achieved again our goal of publishing two editions a year.

Moreover, the realization of the First National Symposium on Education in Astronomy (SNEA), last July, in the campus of UNIRIO, city of Rio de Janeiro, is still echoing.

The event featured about 70 posters and 30 oral communications. Three general lectures, three round tables and meetings of thematic working groups were also held. We await the publication of the Proceedings with abstracts and full papers, which should be available in due course on the Internet, and certainly can show the overall contribution made by the I SNEA.

One of the resolutions taken at the event was the decision about the second SNEA meeting. It is scheduled to take place in São Paulo, USP campus in late July 2012. We hope it will be a success and can continue to consolidate the area of Astronomy Education in our country.

In this issue we have three articles:

High school students' previous knowledge about the stars, by Gustavo Iachel. This paper presents an investigation of the prior knowledge of 125 students the first year of high-school on the physical features of stars. The results show that many students have difficulties in preparing an explanatory model on the functioning of a star, a few acknowledge that stars have a certain finite period of existence, some imagine them with spikes, and a few recognize that a star is formed by a mass of gas.

Astronomy in science textbooks - an analysis of PNLD 2008, by Patricia Amaral and Carlos Eduardo de Oliveira Vaz Quintanilla. This paper presents an analysis of the content present in astronomy textbooks approved in the National Programme of Textbooks, 2008 through some of the categories listed in the Textbook Guide, 2008. Research shows the frequency content of Astronomy in the text, figures and activities of experimentation. It also presents some conceptual errors and other information present in the collections.

Basic concepts of astronomy: a methodological proposal, by Luiz Marcelo Darroze, Renato and Carlos Ariel Heineck Samudio Pérez. The article deals with a methodology that addresses basic concepts of astronomy based on the Meaningful Learning paradigm. The survey data were obtained in an extension course taught by professors and scholars of the Bachelor's Degree in Physics from the University of Passo Fundo to a group of high school students in the same city. The results obtained by the survey instruments through evaluations answered by the participants are discussed in the text.

More information about the Journal and instructions for the authors may be found at the address <<http://www.relea.ufscar.br>>. We remind that the articles may be written in Portuguese, Spanish or English.

Miss Ana Carolina Contini Pietscher is acknowledged for the editorial work on the articles. Our acknowledgements to the authors, referees, and all those who, in some way, helped us to continue with this project, in particular with the preparation of this issue.

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