



## SPACE AND VALORIZATION OF LITERATURE IN-SERVICE TRAINING IN THE EARLY YEARS OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

### *ESPAÇO E VALORIZAÇÃO DA LITERATURA NA FORMAÇÃO EM SERVIÇO DOS ANOS INICIAIS DO ENSINO FUNDAMENTAL*

### *ESPACIO Y VALOR DE LA LITERATURA EN LA FORMACIÓN EN SERVICIO EN LOS PRIMEROS AÑOS DE EDUCACIÓN ELEMENTAL*

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**ABSTRACT:** This article aims to present the results of the research developed at the Municipal University of São Caetano do Sul under the guidance of Professor Ana Sílvia Moço Aparício, who sought to investigate how literature can occupy more space and valorization in school and in-service training of the teacher of the early years of elementary school, in view of the most appropriate work with literature in the classroom. As theoretical references, we are based on authors who address the presence of literature in society, the problem of inadequate schooling of literature, children's literature, and teacher training. The research methodology was exploratory, qualitative, and ethnographic in nature, developed in a municipal school in the ABC region of São Paulo. The data were generated from observations of the school space and in-service training actions, as well as through semi-structured interviews with three school professionals: a teacher and two pedagogical assistants. The results of the analyzes showed that, at school, literature is present in school practices and in times and spaces. However, it is treated and viewed inappropriately, and there are still no effective actions that value it in this space, since there are many mistakes in relation to effective work with literature. On the other hand, we note that there is willingness and willingness on the part of the professionals who work in the school, so that there is a rescue of literature and that it occupies more and more space in the school environment and in the training of teachers

**KEYWORDS:** Literature at school. Literary reading. Teacher training.

**RESUMO** Este artigo tem como objetivo apresentar os resultados da pesquisa desenvolvida na Universidade Municipal de São Caetano do Sul sob a orientação da Professora Doutora Ana Sílvia Moço Aparício. A pesquisa buscou investigar de que forma a literatura pode ocupar maior espaço e valorização na escola e na formação em serviço do professor dos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental, tendo em vista o trabalho mais adequado com a literatura em sala de aula. Como referenciais teóricos, baseamo-nos em autores que abordam a presença da literatura na sociedade, o problema da escolarização inadequada da literatura, a literatura infantil e a formação de professores. A metodologia da pesquisa foi exploratória, de caráter

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*qualitativo e de inspiração etnográfica, desenvolvida em uma escola da rede municipal, da região do ABC paulista. Os dados foram gerados a partir de observações do espaço escolar e das ações de formação em serviço, bem como por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas com três profissionais da escola: uma professora e duas assistentes pedagógicas. Os resultados das análises apontaram que, na escola, a literatura está presente nas práticas escolares e nos tempos e espaços, no entanto, ela é tratada e vista de forma inadequada, e ainda não existem ações efetivas que a valorizem nesse espaço, uma vez que há muitos equívocos em relação ao trabalho efetivo com a literatura. Em contrapartida, notamos que há vontade e disposição por parte dos profissionais que atuam na escola, a fim de que haja um resgate da literatura e que ela ocupe cada vez mais espaço no ambiente escolar e na formação de professores.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Literatura na escola. Leitura literária. Formação de professores.*

**RESUMEN:** *Este artículo tiene como objetivo presentar los resultados de la investigación desarrollada en la Universidad Municipal de São Caetano do Sul bajo la supervisión de la profesora Ana Sílvia Moço Aparício. La investigación buscó indagar cómo la literatura puede ocupar un mayor espacio y valor en la escuela y en la formación en servicio de los docentes en los primeros años de la escuela primaria, con miras a trabajar de manera más adecuada con la literatura en el aula. Como referentes teóricos, nos basamos en autores que abordan la presencia de la literatura en la sociedad, el problema de la escolarización inadecuada en la literatura, la literatura infantil y la formación del profesorado. La metodología de investigación fue exploratoria, de inspiración cualitativa y etnográfica, desarrollada en una escuela municipal de la región ABC de São Paulo. Los datos se generaron a partir de observaciones del entorno escolar y acciones de formación en servicio, así como a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas con tres profesionales de la escuela: un docente y dos asistentes pedagógicos. Los resultados de los análisis mostraron que, en la escuela, la literatura está presente en las prácticas escolares y en los tiempos y espacios, sin embargo, es tratada y vista de manera inapropiada, y aún no existen acciones efectivas que la valoren en este espacio, ya que son muchas las conceptos erróneos sobre el trabajo eficaz con la literatura. Por otro lado, notamos que hay voluntad y voluntad por parte de los profesionales que laboran en la escuela, para que haya una recuperación de la literatura y que ésta ocupe cada vez más espacio en el ámbito escolar y en la formación del profesorado.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Literatura en la Escuela. Lectura literaria. Formación de profesores.*

## **Introduction**

Acting in direct involvement with education professionals, especially in the early years of elementary school, it was possible to observe that the actions aimed at teaching literature in school are welcomed and accepted by the school community. On the other hand, we observed the devaluation of literature in the education of students and teachers, noting a significant emptying of literary culture in these actions. Soares (2003) explains that the problem arises from the process of schooling literature (inevitable and natural in schools), which is problematized in the way it is conducted, in an inadequate manner. The author stresses that it





is not possible to de-school literature, but to treat it properly, bringing literature closer to the students' social practices, placing reading at the center of the social context that surrounds it. Lajolo (1984) also denounces the improper schooling of literature, stating that no literary text was born to be an object of study. In school, the text ends up becoming artificial and a pretext for other activities and learning objects that are not linked to literary fruition.

Given this situation, the continuing education of teachers within the school space and time may represent a possibility to break with this paradigm. In school, especially in these trainings, we do not see literature as a focus of discussion, the guidelines for literature reading practices are given in a sterile way, representing an end and these actions can lead the teacher, and consequently the student, to a lack of interest in literature. From this perspective, our research aimed to answer the following question: in what ways can literature be given more space and value in school and in the in-service training of teachers of the early years of elementary school, to work more appropriately with literature in the classroom? Thus, we established as a general objective to investigate how literature can occupy more space and appreciation in the school and in the in-service training of teachers of the early years of elementary education, aiming at improving the work with literature in the classroom.

The specific objectives of the research were listed with the intention of pointing out aspects that guide formative actions in this context, namely:

- (i) identify if and how literature is approached in school;
- (ii) identify the presence of literature in the in-service training of early elementary school teachers;
- (iii) to analyze, from the point of view of school professionals, the space and appreciation of literature in school and in in-service training;
- (iv) elaborate and make available an interactive space for reflection and socialization of school practices with literature.

## **Theoretical framework**

To understand the relations between society and literature, society, and school, as well as to study the in-service training of teachers in the early years of elementary school, we opted for a referential that could guide such studies.

## **Literature and Society**

We know that, historically, as it has gone through many transformations, the school, among its many attributions, occupies the important condition of a social instrument,



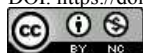


reproducing society's values and ideals, which makes literature (incorporated to the school institution), to be linked to these conditions as well. With this, we deepen our studies in order to understand how literature is inserted in the social environment, for this, we aim first to point out definitions of literature, discuss its functions and its effects.

Even before the advent of Christianity, a new class pattern was beginning to be incorporated into society, and literature naturally adapted to this pattern and thus became a privileged asset. To this elitization, as explained by Auerbach (1970), one must add the clergy as one of the social groups that, throughout the Middle Ages, dominated the erudite goods, promoting censorship or confirmation of these goods.

Literature, therefore, carries with it modes of transmission coming from literate societies that, according to the interests of the erudite classes, control the systems and disseminate cultural goods, privileging certain groups to the detriment of others. Bourdieu and Passeron (1992) explain this structure as an arbitrary way for the privileged classes to distribute these goods, because while these cultural capitals are fixed in these societies, providing more access to individuals from these classes, the system starts to value these same individuals more. There is also another extremely important factor that demonstrates how this capital has been mediated in a dissimulated way by the system. This social structure factor is established now in which a monetary cost is demanded to have access to cultural goods, that is, this cost starts to represent the value that is attributed to instruction when, in fact, the intention is to evaluate the individual's knowledge, linking knowledge to an economic value. Such representations are for Barthes (2013) parts of a mechanism, the author deepens the debate remembering that there are certain language codes linked to erudition and rooted in the very history of humanity, which carry this structure, relating language to society and the way in which this language is manipulated and oppressive by its own structure, also acts as an instrument of social domination.

Candido (2017) explains that certain goods cannot be restricted to an elite and that the naturalization of such values is due to a thought that occurs among some social groups, who feel empowered to evaluate cultural goods as more or less important for the poorer classes, using the prerogative that these groups have more urgent needs to be fulfilled, thus depriving them of fundamental rights. The author reveals that the basis of this reflection is based on the inclusion of a right deeply linked to human rights, the right to literature. Candido (2017) explains that literature becomes a right to the extent that it humanizes, to the extent that it becomes indispensable to human beings, and above all to the extent that its effects lead each individual to organize himself and the world from the power of words, overcoming chaos itself.





This is what Barthes (2015) presents as fruition: a sum of language codes that, when merged, produce feelings impossible to decipher.

## What is Literature?

Literature cannot be defined in a single interpretation, in this way, for its understanding, we need to resort to some concepts, starting with the etymology of the term that, according to Jouve (2012, p. 29, our translation, emphasis added),

Etymologically, we should remember that the word "literature" comes from the Latin *litteratura* ("writing," "grammar," "science"), forged from *littera* ("letter"). In the 16th century, "literature" then designates "culture" and, more exactly, the culture of the literate, that is, *erudition*. To "have literature" is to possess a knowledge, the natural consequence of a sum of readings. Since *literature* presupposes membership in an elite, an aristocracy of the spirit, the term ends up, by successive slippages, coming to designate the "group of people of letters."<sup>3</sup>

According to Jouve (2012), there may be a criterion of recognition of a certain set of properties in a work that defines it as literature, on the other hand, none of these properties must necessarily be present in another work, making it impossible to close the concept. For the understanding of literature, it is therefore necessary to understand that literature follows its own dynamic that changes over time, according to Lajolo (1982, p. 25-26, our translation, emphasis added),

In any case, the rise and fall of concepts of literature seems to follow its own, non-exclusive dynamic: thinkers, writers, artists, and other interested parties discuss, write, polemicize (in the old days they even used to duel!), and thereby modulate concepts that seem to convincingly explain what literature is in view of the production of their time.

## Literature at school

As literature emerges in the social scene, it is naturally incorporated into the school context, and in order to deal with literature at school it is necessary to address aspects of children's literature in Brazil. In fact, children's literature in Brazil today needs public policies to support its dissemination and is influenced by several factors that interfere in its production.

Literature for children in Brazil began with the establishment of the Imprensa Régia (Royal Press) in 1808. Authors Lajolo and Zilberman (1984) explain that publishing activities

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<sup>3</sup> The erudition present also in the etymology of the term.





for children in this period consisted of adaptations and translations, with little material from an exclusively Brazilian literary production, and children's books only appeared after 1824, when the first Brazilian constitution was enacted.

After this period, according to the authors, the consolidation of Brazilian children's literature production occurred between the years 1890 and 1920, when the intermediate social classes expanded showing a country accustomed in part to cultural consumption. From then on, with the country more modernized, society began to value the culture of schooling, and a school model that valued instruction and guaranteed national literature was founded in this period.

The development of children's and young people's literature kept pace with the increase in school attendance and the literature didactics phenomenon was in full rise in the field of debate, so that the quality of what was produced was in evidence. Lajolo and Zilberman (1984) recall that at that time there were complaints about the quality of these materials and authors began to worry about producing works exclusively for children.

Accompanying such changes, in the process, came the work *Narizinho Arrebitado* by writer Monteiro Lobato, adopted in the public schools of the State of São Paulo and, according to Soares (2003), already had a clear indication printed on the cover of the book (which was intended for the second grades), a harbinger of its immediate schooling.

As part of a formal system of educational organization, literature is naturally schooled. However, such process becomes dangerous when there is, in this system, an inadequate treatment. Soares (2003) points to some factors that indicate this treatment, such as reading literary texts as a task; reading assessment, regardless of its strategy; the intention of the objectives of reading and studying the text; the recurrence of always the same texts and the same authors; the absence of some genres; fragmented reading and the transference of the text from its original support, concepts that divert the real meaning of reading a literary text. For the author, the school should have in mind literary reading practices aimed at building the reader and encouraging literary taste. The proper schooling of literature is promoted in the student's social context, aimed at the construction of the reader in formation.

To contemplate the effectiveness of the actions aimed at the formation of a literature reader, Colomer (2007) emphasizes that the construction of the text's understanding, the effort to reread it, according to real and meaningful proposals, activities that lead the student to compare his conclusions with those of his peers, makes the student expand his capacity to produce meaning from the reading of a text.

It is necessary that the reader takes ownership of his learning, according to Cosson (2016) the reader needs the understanding of his learning process and position himself in front





of his readings. The exploration of reading in a proper way starts to be officially considered in Brazil after the publication of the National Curricular Parameters - PCN (BRAZIL, 1997).

The National Curricular Parameters consider as a didactic routing the work with the formation of competent readers, the autonomous conditions of selection of texts that the reader intends to read; reading as a process of construction of meaning; knowing how to relate the texts one reads to other texts and to the world; identifying implicit elements and the meanings attributed to a text so as to justify its reading from various discursive elements and the cognitive-processual approach. The document reinforces the formative perspective of working with text and offering adequate support to the teacher.

Otherwise the BNCC organizes reading practices through methodological axes, however, literature does not appear as a curricular component, Cosson (2013) reminds that public debate is essential for such inconsistencies not to occur,

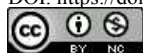
The elaboration of clear and detailed programs is the responsibility of institutions, such as state education departments and universities, but they cannot be built without the decisive participation of literature teachers. It is up to them, primarily, to define the objectives, the contents and the procedures that should be adopted to teach literature. The collective construction of these programs, respecting the idiosyncrasies of local contexts, will certainly better meet the need to reconcile the precepts based on the advancement of knowledge in the area with the daily classroom practice (COSSON, 2013, p. 23, our translation).

Another relevant factor is the maintenance of public education policies regarding the distribution of book collections to schools, which have the function of supporting the literature teaching process and ensuring that access to books is in fact effective, these are the National Textbook Program (PNLD) and the National School Library Program, which had its extinction in 2017.

## **Teacher Training and Literature**

In view of the evident importance of improving education, it is necessary to highlight training processes, and to emphasize the training that takes place in the school environment, that is, in-service training.

For Nóvoa (2002) training is linked to professional experience; according to the author, investing in the person and his/her experience makes the training process meaningful. It is necessary that teachers take ownership of their formative processes and give meaning to them, reflecting on their own practice. Nóvoa (2011) also reminds us that the worn-out and repetitive





structure of training processes within school institutions, old discourses and concepts end up preventing new trends and ways of acting from being established.

In the process of bringing literature and education together, the teacher's role is to know how to deal with the proper treatment of literature teaching, Cosson (2013) explains that for this to occur, the teacher needs to obtain methodological knowledge, know how literature is taught and what literature is taught for, theorizing his practice. The teacher, due to his daily practice, with a demand for diversified studies, ends up leaving aside his own training in literature to supply these other demands.

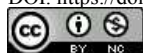
The challenge now is to promote and guarantee a space in the school for these experiences to be part of the teacher's training processes. Considering teacher training as a practice of permanent dialogues and that the teacher, aware of his role, should be able to assume the position of a learner and that in-service training should be permeated by methodological strategies appropriate to the context that presents itself, that space should be seen as an opportunity to expand professional development and, even more, that it should be dedicated to the teacher's human training.

### **Methodological Path**

The research method was defined in the search for a path that would allow a better analysis of the problem and the promotion of a technical and scientific rigor adequate to the study's cutout, thus opting for exploratory research of a qualitative nature of ethnographic inspiration. This scientific work procedure, already developed and explored in the academic environment, shows that, once consolidated, especially in research carried out in the field of education, it establishes itself as an effective means of analysis.

We chose to collect data through observation and semi-structured interviews with the research participants, the observation data were generated in two dimensions: a) observation of the school spaces; b) observation of in-service training actions.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted at the school with three participants individually - a fourth grade teacher and two pedagogical assistants. We aimed to identify the school's work with in-service teacher training focused on the teaching of literature.







## Results

We noticed that in the observation of school spaces there is a large structure of potential spaces in the school for an effective work with literature, however, such spaces are not yet explored frequently or adequately, in addition, the institutional organization hinders the use of these spaces due to several factors. In relation to the observations of the pedagogical meetings, we noticed that literature occupies space in the school and is approached in school practices, however, the distance between the teaching of literary reading and school practice is still large, do not seem to have an organized planning, they are always making room for other demands and serving other purposes and when these trainings occur, they are poorly articulated with the practice or humanized training, showing themselves diluted and fragmented, almost always segmented from contexts that are of interest to the proper training of teachers literature.

Regarding the content of the interviews, we noticed that literature, according to what the interviewees say, and the conceptions evidenced in their speeches, is still seen in a mistaken way and the work with literature is discontinued from practice, valuing the approach of the text as a pretext for decoding activities, textual analysis, or the meaning of words, actions widely criticized by experts, but that somehow, are not clarified in the training of managers and teachers. According to the interviewees, in-service training is the big gap to be filled in this system, because no training actions in literature were mentioned in the research period (2019) demonstrating that the researched education network faces the great challenge of assuming the commitment to meet this need, training trainers and providing the team of teachers with training in literature in an adequate way that stimulates and highlights the good practices that eventually occur in the classroom. It is in this sense that in-service training should occur in school in a harmonious way, providing the exchange and sharing of knowledge in a continuous and organized way that favors, above all, the encounter of the reader with the text, aiming at the formation of literary readers.

## Conclusion

The study sought to answer the following question: in what ways can literature be given more space and value at school and in the in-service training of teachers of the early years of elementary education, to work more appropriately with literature in the classroom? To answer the question presented, we expanded and gave meaning to the reflections directed to the theoretical reference; these reflections served as fundamental bases for the genesis of the study.

We conclude that literature is present in school time and space, in the in-service training





activities, and in the teachers' practice. However, it is noted that literature is still undervalued and that there are many misconceptions about the effective work with literature at school. However, the professionals who work in schools are willing and open to the necessary changes.

There is a path of possibilities for such changes to occur, one of them consists in the sharing of knowledge and experiences, the contribution of these professionals guarantees the space of literature in these spheres and expresses the inclination for an effectively better work with literature. Thus, with this article, we hope to contribute a little more to the effectiveness of in-service training actions for literature in school, the work of the teacher and his/her practices as a literary reader, aware that the debate about literature in in-service training should remain active and constant, and knowing that there is still much to contribute. The desire remains, that the formative process of students and teachers be built in a fair and legitimate way, eliminating any form of social inequality, and that the impact of literature in the life of each citizen represents the humanizing sense that literature can provide to those who benefit from it.

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