

Literacy practices beyond the polarization of methods: reflections on lived experiences*¹

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Abstract

Throughout the history of literacy education in Brazil, various methods have been used, ranging from synthetic approaches to constructivist perspectives. This study is a case study that investigates the pedagogical practices of a first-grade teacher in elementary education. The article seeks to understand whether adopting different methodological approaches in the literacy process offers educational benefits. It highlights the importance of literacy as a meaningful social practice and advocates for incorporating metacognitive strategies during literacy instruction. The objective is to determine whether blending different literacy methods enhances teaching and learning outcomes. The interventions were adapted based on the initial diagnostic assessment, aiming to integrate diverse practices that emphasize literacy from a broader perspective. Following Magda Soares' framework, the study observed significant progress after systematic interventions and periodic feedback, underscoring the importance of expanding exposure to written culture and strengthening literacy development from a social literacy perspective. The study concludes that combining methodologies can be beneficial, as each method may effectively address different learning needs. However, it is crucial to implement interventions tailored to the individual learning processes of each student.

Keywords

Literacy – Social literacy – Literacy methods.

* Data availability: All data supporting the results of this study are included in the article.

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Contextual background

There is ongoing debate in the educational field about the most effective literacy method. This study is relevant as it emphasizes that learning is a right for all and should take precedence over methodological disputes or oppositions. In this context, it is essential to reflect on the following question: does the use of different literacy methods enhance the teaching and learning process?

Throughout Brazil's history, different ideologies have shaped the concept of literacy, alongside the development of literacy practices. According to Mortatti (2019), these developments are linked to literacy methods, with four key periods illustrating the ongoing debate over reading and writing methodologies. As new approaches emerged, previous methods were often discarded, deemed obsolete compared to the latest "innovation."

The first period refers to the methodization of reading, based on the synthetic method, which follows a phonographic organization from parts to whole. Among the synthetic methods, the spelling method emphasizes the names of alphabet letters and their combinations. The phonics method focuses on phonemes, the sounds of each letter, and syllabic blending. The syllabic method prioritizes syllabic analysis, progressing from simpler to more complex syllables. During this period, copying exercises were also common, with a strong emphasis on penmanship and rote memorization of spelling rules. This context led to the development of primers, which applied the syllabic method and presented texts in an artificial manner, lacking cultural meaning.

The second period refers to the institutionalization of a new method called the analytic method, which followed an approach from the whole to the parts. This method was classified into two branches: word method and sentence method, which involved using a word as the starting point and, after recognizing several words, breaking them down into syllables to form new words; and the global method, in which the text itself was taken as the initial learning unit. Writing skills were still developed through copying exercises, dictation, and penmanship practice.

The third period is characterized by the natural method, which emphasizes a personalized literacy approach adapted to the learner's maturity level. In this method, learning is promoted as a physiological process for developing reading operational systems, encouraging creativity and using specific social and environmental stimuli while considering the student's linguistic repertoire.

The fourth and final period is centered on constructivist studies, influenced by Emilia Ferreiro's (1986) research on the Psychogenesis of Written Language. This pedagogical approach views the student as an active participant in the learning process and the teacher as a mediator, guiding children based on their prior knowledge. Learning is constructed through interactive activities and meaningful experiences, allowing students to develop different skills as they engage with written language.

Based on this premise, the need to make learning meaningful became evident, with a focus on everyday social practices. Literacy understood solely as coding and decoding proved insufficient to meet children's needs regarding the meaning and purpose of learning to read and write.

Soares (2016, 2020) states that there is no single effective method for learning. It is essential to monitor students' progress and ensure gradual development. Teaching methods do not work in isolation; they are influenced by various factors, including personal and socioemotional characteristics, social class, gender, personality traits, age, linguistic variations, and professional experiences.

Mortatti (2019) highlights that each teaching method has specific attributes and must be meaningful to the learner. Soares (2017) supports the idea of reinventing literacy through systematic instruction but emphasizes the importance of maintaining its social function, which is literacy as a social practice.

An essential contribution to teaching and learning during the literacy process is incorporating pedagogical practices that foster the development of metacognitive skills. According to Amorim and Aguiar (2021) and Morais (2012), this involves teaching students to reflect on their own learning process, helping them understand how they think, learn, and solve problems. By developing these skills, students become more aware of their reading and writing strategies, which can enhance their effectiveness and autonomy in learning.

The Cognitive Science of Reading, which examines how people develop reading and writing skills, emphasizes that literacy is more than just deciphering letters and words; it involves understanding and internalizing the alphabetic writing system. On the other hand, social literacy is seen as the application of these skills in various everyday practices, encompassing social and cultural contexts. Thus, literacy and social literacy complement each other, integrating both technical knowledge and the ability to use reading and writing meaningfully in daily life.

The aim of this research is to analyze whether the use of different literacy methods brings benefits to the teaching and learning process. In this context, it is essential to emphasize that social literacy is a key pedagogical practice that fosters meaningful learning, enabling students to become competent language users. Therefore, this approach must be aligned with the teacher's understanding of a comprehensive perspective on literacy instruction. As Freire (1996) states, a teacher's knowledge should be viewed not as the mere transfer of information, but as the creation of opportunities for students to construct their own knowledge.

For this purpose, the research adopted a qualitative and exploratory methodology, focusing on the observation and analysis of pedagogical practices aimed at literacy instruction in first-grade elementary school classrooms. Interventions were performed in a school environment, integrating different methods to enable a more holistic approach to literacy.

Instruments and practical strategies

The results presented in this study stem from pedagogical experiences shared by a teacher and her students. The data were analyzed through a qualitative approach, supporting the teacher's lived experiences in the classroom. The description and analysis of such experiences aim to highlight the differences between literacy concepts, showing



that when combined in practice, they can be effective, reinforcing the connection between theoretical knowledge and pedagogical practice.

Data were collected through practical activities, student-written work records, diagnostic assessments, and systematic observations of the teaching-learning process. The analysis of written samples made it possible to identify students' challenges and strengths, guiding pedagogical interventions.

In addition, playful and collaborative activities, such as games and group discussions, encouraged student interaction and reflection on language use. The continuous feedback approach and pedagogical mediation were essential for adjusting teaching strategies to meet students' needs.

This approach allowed for ongoing monitoring of student progress, contributing to the construction of knowledge and the refinement of hypotheses about alphabetic writing.

According to Gil (2008), this type of research involves interpreting a situation that unfolded in the context of a didactic intervention, using materials that have not yet undergone analytical treatment.

This study is based on the analysis of the experience of 2022 with a first-grade class in a private school located in Vila Mariana, in the southern region of São Paulo. The school serves a predominantly upper-middle-class clientele, with most families being white, college-educated, financially stable, and maintaining a standard of living commensurate with their social class.

The school's pedagogical approach is based on knowledge construction through curricular integration, following Brazilian National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC) guidelines, and emphasizes experimental and interpersonal experiences that involve cognitive, social, and emotional aspects in a continuous action-reflection-action process. In terms of teaching and learning, the school aims for measurable academic outcomes, including high scores on standardized tests and successful progression through academic cycles. Since the pandemic, the institution has invested in teacher training, focusing on digital transformation and the adoption of active methodologies.

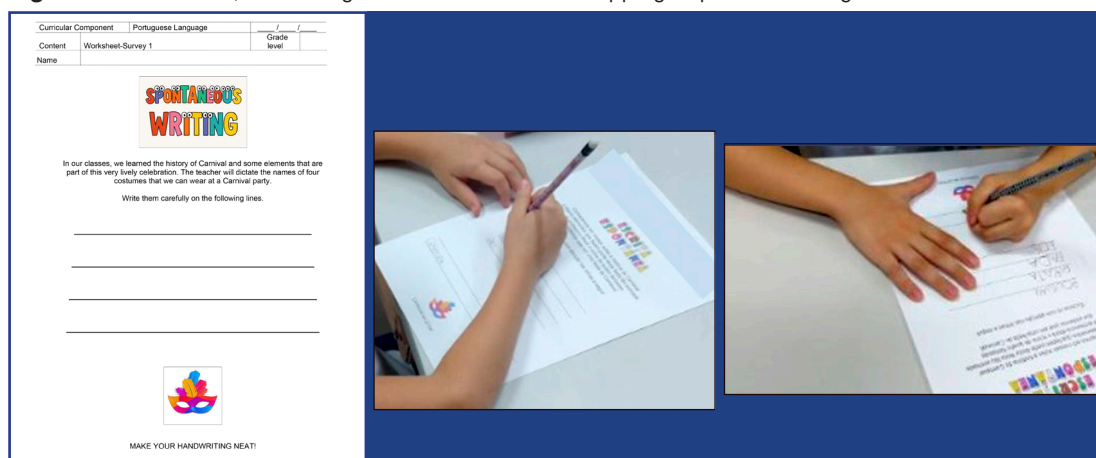
The classroom teacher holds a degree in Pedagogy and several specializations, including Graduate studies in Literacy and Social Literacy, Neuropsychopedagogy, and Psychomotricity. This diverse academic background enables her to provide high-quality instruction, aligning educational theories with practical approaches that address the individual needs of students.

To develop this research, multiple sources were analyzed, including the Pedagogical Proposal, Political-Pedagogical Project, and various student activities, as detailed throughout the text. Practical activities were categorized into initial diagnostic assessments, ongoing activities, structured learning exercises, and projects. The study also included reflections on the alphabetic writing system and word analysis, considering irregularities and linguistic functions. This structured approach aims to review content in different ways, respecting learning stages, timelines, and students' cognitive, social, and emotional characteristics.

Revealing results and reflections

The exploratory analysis of the Initial Diagnostic Assessment (Practice 1), conducted on February 14, 2022, provided insight into students' prior knowledge regarding their writing hypotheses. On February 15, 2022, an observation table (Practice 2) was created, serving as the foundation for developing literacy proposals (Practices 3, 4, and 5) based on the observed results.

Figure 1 - Practice 1, Initial Diagnostic Assessment – mapping of prior knowledge



Source: Original research results.

The Initial Diagnostic Assessment (Practice 1), shown in Figure 1, was conducted in February, focusing on the history of Carnival. Before the assessment, students explored the semantic repertoire related to Carnival traditions and their evolution. This phase involved handling various materials, such as text cards about Carnival (including traditional songs, curiosities, word lists, news articles, and books), which provided students with confidence and security during the evaluation.

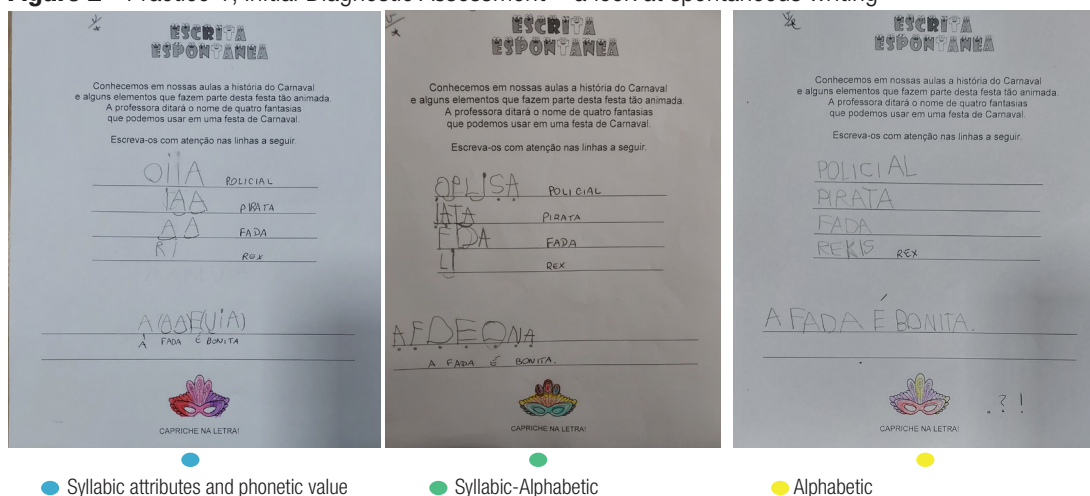
After interacting with different texts, students were asked to write words related to Carnival. Some words were dictated based on costumes worn during a children's Carnival party experienced by the class. The list included polysyllabic, trisyllabic, disyllabic, and monosyllabic words, pronounced naturally, without syllabic fragmentation.

A sentence containing one of the previously mentioned words was then dictated to assess writing accuracy. Students were asked to write the dictated words as they knew and then read aloud what they had written, pointing to the corresponding graphic symbols. This step made it possible to observe how each child processed the words, whether by analyzing letter by letter or by recognizing the word as a whole.

According to Fernandes (2010), this initial approach exemplifies a literacy-rich environment, providing authentic reading and writing situations that allow children to develop their own understanding of how reading and writing work.

Figure 2, illustrating spontaneous writing, presents selected samples of three different literacy hypotheses demonstrated by the class, highlighting their distinct characteristics.

Figure 2 - Practice 1, Initial Diagnostic Assessment – a look at spontaneous writing



Source: Original research results.

Translation note: Figure 2 shows the activity in which the teacher dictated some words, and a sentence related to carnival celebrations in Brazil. The words are policeman, pirate, fairy, Rex (in Brazil, the name "Rex" is commonly used for dogs). The dictated sentence was "the fairy is beautiful".

Through writing, students' prior knowledge about reading and writing was observed. According to Ferreiro and Teberosky (1986), children should write as they understand, while teachers should identify their level of writing development. The authors argue that recognizing the stage a child is in allows teachers to plan meaningful activities that support progress in literacy. Ferreiro and Teberosky (1986) and Grossi (1990) agree that children go through different hypothesis levels as they learn to understand and use the writing system.

In this context, Figure 2 (Practice 1) presents a sample that demonstrates writing with syllabic attributes and phonetic value. While reading, the child pointed to each letter, associating it with the syllable of the word, as indicated by the curved marks below the letters. This suggests a connection with conventional letter representation. The characteristics of this writing stage include the use of one letter to represent each syllable, maintaining an association with phonetic value. The challenges in this phase involve the need to expand letter knowledge in a more conventional way. Expected progress includes understanding that the number of letters in a word does not necessarily match the number of syllables, even if the child has not yet fully grasped the concept of syllable division.

The second sample illustrates syllabic-alphabetic writing, a stage in which the child sometimes completes the syllable and sometimes does not. The curved marks below the writing indicate the verbalization of the syllable, while the dots represent the letters forming the syllable. Expected progress in this phase includes continued work on syllable perception, phoneme awareness, and letter quantity in each word.

The final sample represents the alphabetic hypothesis, where the child establishes consistent relationships between sounds and letters. The spelling of the last word shows non-conventional orthography (e.g., *rakes* instead of *rex*). At this stage, the child understands the phonetic value of most or all letters and demonstrates stability in writing words. During the activity, the child expressed concern about spelling, asking whether *policial* should be written with “s” or “c”. Additionally, the child’s sentence writing did not show word agglutination, indicating a more advanced stage.

According to Teberosky and Colomer (2003), based on Ferreiro (2011), the psychogenesis of writing defines four types of writing development: pre-syllabic writing, characterized by a lack of correspondence between letters and sounds; syllabic writing, in which the child perceives individual elements of written language and often associates one letter per syllable; syllabic-alphabetic writing, where the child sometimes applies the phoneme-grapheme relationship and sometimes does not; and finally, alphabetic writing, marked by a systematic correspondence between letters and phonemes, even if spelling is not yet conventional.

Figure 3 - Practice 2 – Observation table of writing hypotheses: mapping hypotheses

NAME	Pre-syllabic	Syllabic	Syllabic-alphabetic	Alphabetic
A				
B				
C				
D				
E				
F				
G				
H				
I				
J				
K				
L				
M				
N				
O				
P				
Q				
R				
S				
T				

Source: Original research results.

Regarding the writing hypotheses demonstrated by the students, Practice 2, which involved the Observation Table of Writing Hypotheses (Figure 3), revealed that 10 children exhibited characteristics of the syllabic hypothesis, 6 demonstrated syllabic-alphabetic features, and 4 showed alphabetic characteristics. No students displayed the pre-syllabic hypothesis.

This record highlighted a heterogeneous group in the acquisition of the alphabetic writing system, allowing for the development of diverse and meaningful activities. The approach included individual mediation and encouragement, as well as ongoing guidance and support, respecting the unique learning characteristics of each child.

According to Fernandes (2010), it is essential to design activities that focus on disrupting provisional writing hypotheses and restructuring new ones, guiding students toward the consolidation of conventional writing.

Although the initial diagnostic assessment evaluated only one aspect of written language use, it enabled the creation of individualized and group-based activities. These activities included working with students' own names, reading a variety of texts, phonological awareness exercises, interactive digital and analog games, and spontaneous writing through text production, considering multiple forms of communication and the social function of writing.

In this regard, Soares (2016, 2020), Mortatti (2019), and Fernandes (2010) agree that literacy develops through learning the relationships between phonemes and graphemes, considering different existing methods. Additionally, social literacy emerges through reading and writing practices as social functions. Thus, literacy and social literacy are inseparable processes.

The following section presents original activities designed by the researching teacher, in collaboration with the *Projeto Presente* educational material for first grade, published by *Editora Moderna*. These activities aim to develop competent users of written language, providing effective conditions for critical and autonomous reading in various situations and fields of knowledge. They also seek to enhance metalinguistic skills, which are essential for reading development, especially in the early stages of the process.

Practice 3, activity 1: learning connections – ongoing and systematic activities conducted between February and March

The initial activity was based on Toquinho's poem "*Todo mundo tem um nome*". The discussion, guided by the text, explored the importance of names, identity, recognition, and their meanings. Children were encouraged to research the origin and meaning of their names and later shared their discoveries in a group discussion.

Following this experience, the students created a photo chart ("*carômetro*") (Figure 4) displaying their photos and names. Each child identified their name, printed on a sheet of paper, and pronounced it aloud for their classmates. They also identified the first letter of their names and its corresponding sound. In small groups, they then arranged the names in alphabetical order.

Some children had difficulty recognizing letters during the activity. To support them, interventions were conducted using a movable alphabet and verbal recitation of the alphabetic sequence, helping them organize names by their initial letters (Figure 4). Although they memorized the alphabet's spoken sequence, some still struggled with recognizing the written form of certain letters. The intervention followed the synthetic method's progression (from parts to whole), incorporating spelling and syllable segmentation. Students started with the letter's name, sound, and written form, promoting meaningful contextualization and encouraging word analysis rather than just visual recognition of syllables and letters.

For some children, the greatest challenge was distinguishing names that began with the same letter. In these cases, the intervention focused on analyzing the next letter, allowing students to explore syllable formation and manipulate other letters to observe how word pronunciation changes.

To support this activity, children were encouraged to pronounce letter sounds and their combinations, articulating their lips out loud to enhance awareness and attention to sounds, using the magnetic board. As a model, the teacher's name was presented, and students engaged in guided reflections: What is the first letter of this name? What sound does this letter make? What is the next letter? If we put them together, what sound do they form? What happens if we change the first letter? If the first letter stays the same, which letter should we check next to organize the sequence?

This intervention incorporated elements of the phonics method, which provided valuable contributions to student learning. The goal was to emphasize the sound of each letter as it was placed on the magnetic board. By engaging both visual and auditory sensory channels, students participated actively and demonstrated significant learning progress.

With teacher mediation and active student participation, children built applicable knowledge based on their prior learning. From Vygotsky's (2001) perspective, this collaborative process, known as the Zone of Proximal Development, highlights the importance of active student involvement in redefining their learning experiences.

After organizing the photo chart ("carômetro"), students were encouraged to write their classmates' names using movable letters, reflecting on the relationship between phonemes and graphemes. Writing their own names served as a key reference point for incorporating other texts and fostering deeper reflections on writing. Handling movable letters allowed students to observe individual letters, their isolated sounds, and their combinations with other letters. According to Colello (2004), writing one's own name is a meaningful literacy milestone, acting as a stable reference point. The more experience students have with familiar names, the greater their ability to analyze and reflect on unfamiliar words.

Additional emergent writing activities were introduced, such as name bingo and the creation of name tags for field trips or out-of-school studies. These activities reinforced the social function of writing, emphasizing personal identification and the practical use of written language in everyday situations.

Figure 4- Practice 3, activity 1

Source: Original research results.

Practice 3, activity 2: exploring knowledge – ongoing and systematic activities conducted between April and May

To create interactive experiences that combined reading and play, children were introduced to simple, rhythmic texts, allowing them to engage with the alphabetic writing system through nursery rhymes and easily memorizable poems. This approach reflects elements of analytic methods, where the text serves as the central unit, always connected to its social function.

The activity began with the presentation of the song “A barata diz que tem” through an audiovisual resource. The children recited the song collectively, while being guided to follow the reading with their fingers from left to right. After reading, the textual organization of the genre was explained, highlighting its structure in verses and stanzas and its rhythmic qualities when sung.

During the activity (Figure 5), children were divided into groups to reconstruct the recited stanza, using words printed on cardboard and scattered across the workspace. This step highlighted students’ awareness that a text or sentence is composed of words, reinforcing lexical awareness. According to Soares (2017), this awareness of words as units of speech emerges only in the early stages of literacy. Through exposure to written material, children begin to identify words in speech and understand their arbitrary nature, distinguishing between signifier (sounds) and meaning.

The teacher provided individual mediation during the task. Although the children worked in groups, some required guidance on reading strategies, making this a problem-solving moment. The teacher prompted reflection with questions such as: “Which word do you need to complete the sentence? How can you find it? Say it out loud! What is the first sound? Which letters form this sound? What about the last sound?” For example, in the word *barata*, students identified three distinct sound units (ba – ra – ta), each formed by different letters.

This approach aligns with the global analytic method, in which the text was read and memorized before being broken down into sentences and words. Children who struggled to identify words received teacher support, using early reading techniques such as pronouncing the target word and analyzing its sounds, letter patterns, or initial and final syllables. This strategy helped students recognize words and complete the stanza reconstruction. However, the activity was not mechanical; instead, children were encouraged to understand the structural process of writing within a social context, drawing on prior knowledge and making comparisons between words.

Fernandes (2010) supports this type of intervention, stating that if a teacher designs reading activities in a way that provides support, children can read before mastering conventional reading. Colello (2004) reinforces this perspective, emphasizing that literacy is not just about mastering the written language system but about making students active language users. This allows them to develop strategies to question, discuss, infer, and comprehend based on pre-existing knowledge.

Figure 5 - Practice 3, activity 2



Source: Original research results.

Translation note: Figure 5 presents the activity related to the children's song “The cockroach says she has”. On the floor, words from the song were arranged for the students to place in the correct order. In another activity, they had to complete a part of the song using the missing words: cockroach, seven, lie, only has one. The _____ says she has _____ skirts of thread
It's a _____ from the cockroach she _____
Ha, ha, ha, ho, ho, ho she only has one.

Practice 3, activity 3: communication in action – ongoing and systematic activities conducted between May and June

Using the poem “Mais Bicholiques” by Tatiana Belinky, several small doors made from shoeboxes were placed around the classroom, each displaying the initial letter of some animals mentioned in the poem. Children were invited to listen to the sounds of certain animals and match their names to the corresponding initial letter on the door. When opening a door and finding a stuffed animal, each child was encouraged to spontaneously write the animal’s name using movable letters. The task included thought-provoking questions about writing, such as: How many letters are in the word? What are the first and last letters? What sounds do these letters make? What other words can be formed using these letters? The intervention explored letters both in isolation and within syllables, as seen in the word “gato,” where the first syllable contains the sound of the letter “g” (gê) and the syllabic sound “ga” (ga).

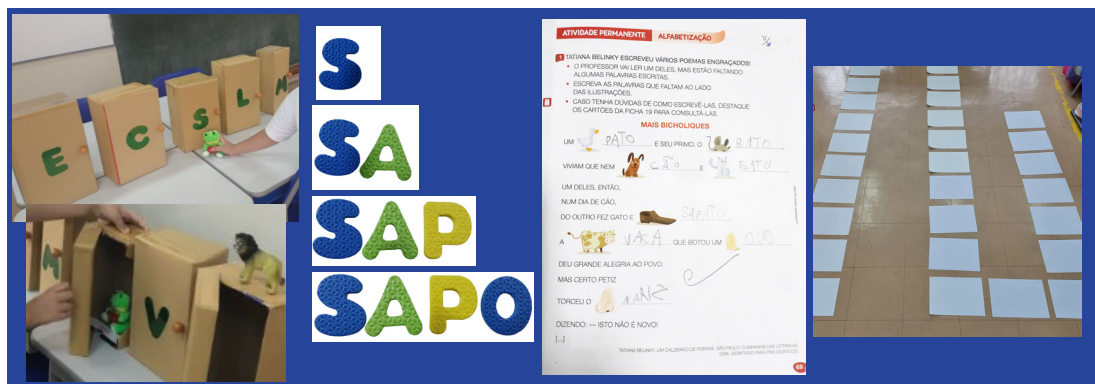
The activity (Figure 6) also explored rhymes, alliteration, and phonemic awareness. Through the poem, children identified similar initial and final sounds in certain words, making connections based on guided prompts. This approach fostered metacognitive skills and phonological awareness, as students reflected on their own learning process and became aware of the strategies they used to identify rhymes and alliterations. The interactive mediation focused on a global text analysis, without isolating syllables, allowing students to make predictions based on their prior knowledge. This proposal aligns with global and natural analytic methods, where spontaneous writing was based on a meaningful set of familiar words, such as their classmates’ names.

Students who had difficulty with writing were encouraged to count how many times they opened their mouths while pronouncing the animal’s name, recording their observations on a large paper trail. They jumped on boxes according to the number of syllables in the word, reflecting on spelling and sounds, which helped them build their writing skills. Some children recognized syllables by listening to sounds and blending letters, while others identified only initial letters. However, all students associated sounds with their classmates’ names, as in the example of “sapo,” which they associated with the letter in classmate Sofia’s name.

During the inference process, some students already recognized that manipulating letters could create new words. For example, by replacing “s” with “r” and “t” with “p” in the word “sapo,” they formed “rato”; changing “s” to “p” resulted in “pato.” In response, the teacher guided mediation through thought-provoking questions, such as: “The word ‘sapo’ starts with ‘s’, the same letter as in ‘Sofia’, but the initial syllable sounds different. In ‘sapo’, the first syllable is ‘sa’; in ‘Sofia’, it is ‘so’. What is similar, and what is different?” The mediation and feedback focused on problematizing the experience.

Amorim and Aguiar (2021) support this approach, stating that scientific research indicates that interactive interventions are more effective in encouraging children to reflect on sounds and their influence on written language. Demonstrating syllabic and letter sounds is essential for students to understand that a syllable is not just a combination of vowels and consonants, but also a blend of phonemes.

Figure 6 - Practice 3, activity 3



Source: Original research results.

Practice 3, activity 4: connecting words – ongoing and systematic activities conducted between June and August

In the days leading up to the activity, children engaged with diverse texts, illustrative and informational videos, and discussions about the origins, cultural diversity, and traditions of *Festas Juninas*. To set the context, they dressed in traditional attire and tasted typical *Festa Junina* foods, creating a festive and immersive environment alongside their classmates.

After the celebration, one group of students was invited to create a list of words related to typical *Festa Junina* foods, while another group wrote notes for their classmates, which were delivered through the “Correio Elegante,” a common tradition in school celebrations (Figure 7). Groups were heterogeneously composed and freely chosen, encouraging collaboration among participants. Teberosky (1994) highlights that group learning situations support shared understanding of writing through peer interaction.

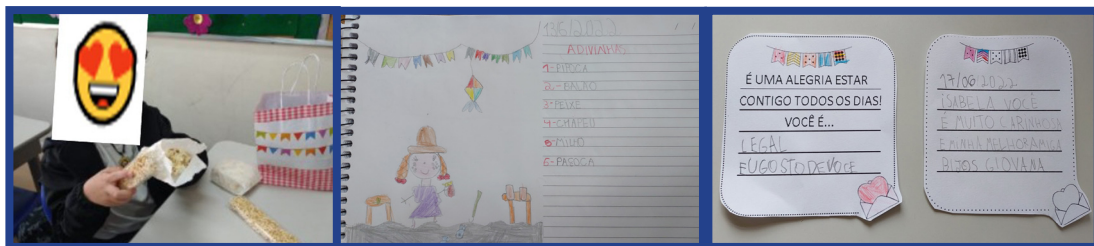
During the tasks, some students needed assistance in identifying letters and forming syllables. In these cases, the intervention followed the same principles as Activity 3, incorporating the movement-based “giant trail” activity once again. Each pronounced segment was analyzed by reflecting on the emitted sounds.

For this group, syllable recognition began with the initial letter, prompting questions such as: “What is the first letter in the syllable of the word you want to write?” In the word “bolo,” for example, the “bo” syllable was analyzed. The goal was for children to realize that the letter “b” does not stand alone when pronouncing “bo.” Mediation encouraged them to identify the missing letter, recognizing the vowel as the dominant sound, often making references to classmates’ names or other meaningful elements. This intervention strategy stimulated various aspects of metalinguistic awareness, with a focus on syntactic, semantic, and phonological components. By relating phonemes to their corresponding letters or letter groups, children developed an understanding of the alphabetic principle and learned to apply phoneme-grapheme correspondence rules, which are essential for word identification (Morais, A. 2019).

The BNCC (Brasil, 2018) underscores the importance of phonological awareness activities, which involve perceiving language sounds and understanding how they separate and combine to form new words.

For the other group, which demonstrated more developed spontaneous writing, the objective was to problematize the activity through the production of written notes, fostering an understanding of text structure and social communication. Intervention included guidance on word spacing and the construction of short texts. Mediation focused on word segmentation and agglutination, which are common characteristics in this transitional writing stage. Some notes were selected and rewritten collaboratively with the students, allowing them to reflect on and analyze the necessary modifications.

Figure 7 - Practice 3, activity 4



Source: Original research results.

Translation note: Figure 7 shows a list of words related to traditional foods from the “Festa Junina” celebrations [Tradicional Brazilian June Festival], while another group wrote little notes to their classmates. The words on the list are: 1. Popcorn; 2. Balloon; 3. Fish; 4. Hat; 5. Corn; 6. Paçoca (a traditional peanut candy). The first note says: “It’s a joy to be with you every day! You are... cool, I like you.” The second note says: “Isabela, you are very sweet. You are my best friend. Kisses, Giovana.”

Complementary activities related to Practice 3, conducted between June and September

To enhance phonemic awareness, the “Pinos Humanos” game (Figure 8), played outside the classroom, allowed students to form words by encoding the isolated sounds of letters. The class was divided into groups, with each child wearing a vest displaying a specific letter. Images of words containing letters with variable sounds in different contexts were shown. The teacher displayed an image of a cat and asked: “What image is this?” (Answer: *gato*). “What is the sound of the first letter?” (Answer: */gê/*). “And what about the first syllable?” (Answer: */ga/*).

All students correctly pronounced the sounds, but when representing the corresponding letters, some wrote “g/a,” while others indicated the letter “h” in isolation, due to phonetic association (aga). For these students, the intervention emphasized that while “h” may sound similar to “ga,” it is silent in some words. To reinforce this concept, a word list containing “h” was displayed on the classroom board. The reflection continued with the presentation of new images and the same guiding questions, now focusing on complex syllables.

Another play-based approach was the 3D games “Trilha Humana” and “Lince Humano” (Figure 8). In this activity, a giant trail was created using sheets of paper, with each step marked along the path. Students, divided into groups, rolled the dice

and advanced according to the number obtained. Upon landing on a space, they had to identify the initial letter sound of a word, such as “cama” (pronounced /k/) or “geladeira” (pronounced /gê/). The words were age-appropriate and selected based on the group’s learning profile, promoting an analytical approach to writing that contrasted the phonics method with the differences between speech and writing in context.

The intervention was guided by the question: “Why were different letters or syllables used to represent these images?” Students realized that many sounds can have different graphic representations, but some spelling rules had not yet been fully understood. This occurs because certain letters have multiple phonemes, which can make comprehension more challenging in the early stages of literacy. To introduce orthographic conventions, the teacher mediated the identification of letters, explaining that the letter “c” has two sounds: “k” when followed by the vowels “a,” “o,” and “u,” and “s” when followed by “e” or “i.”

Other letters, such as “g” and “j,” were introduced using the same strategy, prompting reflections on spelling patterns. As children gradually mastered the alphabetic principle, they improved in phoneme-grapheme correspondences, which facilitated reading development. However, the impact on writing was also observed, particularly in relation to orthographic challenges.

Figure 8 - Practice 3, complementary activities



Source: Original research results.

Other complementary activities focused on interaction, collaborative work, and technology integration (Figure 9). The book “O Grúfalo” by Julia Donaldson served as the starting point for station rotation activities, which included: a digital game with questions about the text; writing invitations for an exhibition; an analog game about the characters; an art station for creating a monster; a written production describing the monster’s name and attributes; and an oral presentation of the creations. The stations were independent, allowing children to freely choose their activities.

The integration of various technologies enhances learning (Moran, Masetto and Behrens, 2000), while station rotation stands out as an effective methodology grounded in cognitive neuroscience (Morais, J. 2019). This model helps maintain students’ attention, fostering selective focus as they switch between tasks. In this way, the activity aligns with active methodologies, encouraging student participation, valuing prior knowledge and initiative, and enhancing knowledge construction.

Figure 9 - Practice 3, complementary activities



Source: Original research results.

Practice 4, activity 5: educating to care project – activities conducted between September and October

The projects linked to Practice 4 emerged from reflections on children’s narratives and curiosities. This study highlights a sample of activities developed over two months, emphasizing interpersonal relationships and pedagogical practices. In addition to fostering metalinguistic skills, these activities prioritized socioemotional strategies under the theme “Educating to Care.”

The proposal was inspired by the book “A Fabulosa Máquina de Amigos” by Nick Bland, which explores behaviors, emotions, and relationships in the age of technology. Before reading, children were encouraged to develop reading strategies by analyzing the cover illustrations. According to Fernandes (2010), children can engage in reading before mastering linguistic conventions, activating cognitive processes that allow them to formulate hypotheses about the story’s content.

After an informal discussion, the physical book was read aloud, followed by a video adaptation that summarized the story with visual effects. During the reading, children were encouraged to express their thoughts, drawing on their prior knowledge about the characters' emotions. In a large group discussion, they reflected on the narrative, focusing on the behavior of the main character (Pipoca) after discovering a cell phone.

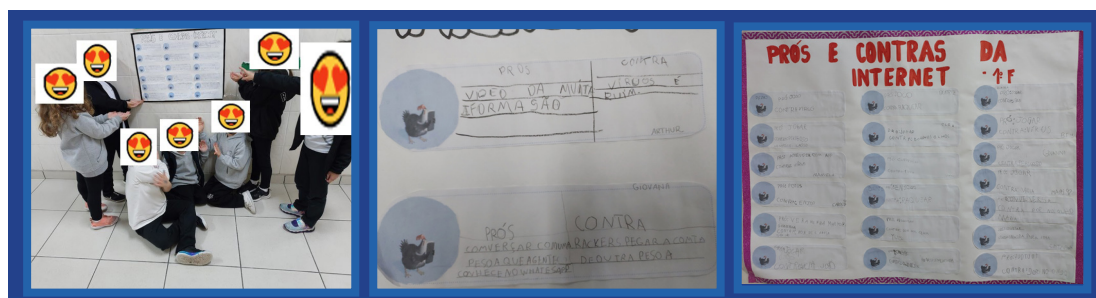
This moment sparked a discussion on the benefits and drawbacks of technology, particularly the excessive use of cell phones and social media. Through a playful and age-appropriate approach, children reflected on the consequences of their actions, the importance of impulse control, empathy, and constructive conflict resolution. The activity also emphasized the value of relationships, fostering kindness, respect, and unity, especially among friends.

In this context, children were invited to create two lists—one highlighting the benefits and the other the drawbacks of the internet—spontaneously noting both positive and negative aspects of technology use. Once completed, the lists were displayed on the classroom board and shared with the school community (Figure 10).

This activity encouraged deep reflection on the risks of virtual relationships and the importance of in-person friendships, promoting self-awareness and active participation. Through dialogue and inferences, children collaboratively built an understanding of the emotional aspects of digital interactions.

Most of the didactic sequence was centered on oral discourse, addressing not only specific literacy challenges but also socioemotional aspects, emphasizing the importance of friendship. This approach aligns with Soares (2020), who advocates for reading and writing instruction contextualized within everyday social practices. According to Camargo and Daros (2018), student motivation is enhanced when learning is rooted in real-world problem-solving, allowing children to analyze, reflect, and assign meaning to their discoveries.

Figure 10 - Practice 4, activity 5 – “Educating to Care” Project



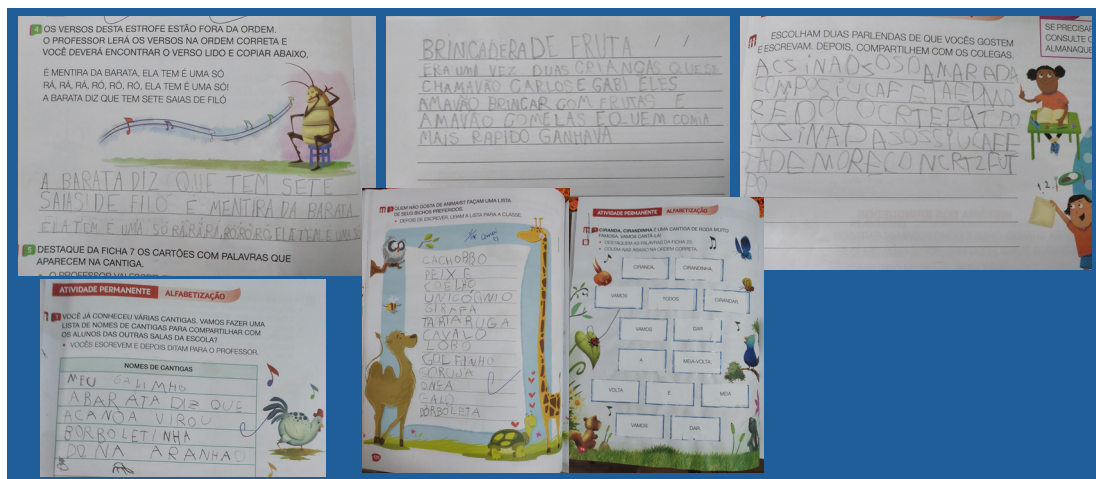
Source: Original research results.

Translation note: Figure 10 presents two lists about the benefits and harms of the internet, with notes made by the students about the positive and negative aspects of using this technology. The central image shows the following points in favor: “videos bring a lot of information” and “chatting with someone we know on WhatsApp”; and points against: “viruses are bad” and “hackers steal other people’s accounts.” In the third image, each student pointed out one positive and one negative aspect of using the internet. The most frequently mentioned negative aspect was the “virus” that invades computers, and the most cited positive aspect was being able to play online games.

After an extensive learning repertoire and the progress identified through formative assessment, the activities in Practice 5 were conducted throughout the year, emphasizing spontaneous writing without teacher mediation (Figure 11). Children were encouraged to create texts with different structures, always linked to the previously explored contexts. These texts reflected their evolution and development in relation to the skills and competencies expected for their age group. The process-oriented assessment allowed for continuous monitoring of each student's learning pace, enabling adjustments in pedagogical mediation based on individual needs. Gadotti (2006) describes this type of assessment as continuous and formative, highlighting its role in identifying what the student has already learned and what still needs improvement, in order to provide varied and appropriate activities that facilitate learning.

The writing samples reflect individual characteristics in the acquisition of linguistic repertoire, highlighting both persistent challenges and progress. Observed aspects include transitions between writing hypotheses, letter omissions and substitutions, hypersegmentation and hyposegmentation, agglutinations as well as spatial organization and orthographic conventions. These insights informed the teacher's planning, guiding the continuation of lessons while embracing the plurality of literacy methods.

Figure 11 - Practice 5, process-oriented assessment



Source: Original research results.

Translation note: Figure 11 presents, from left to right, children's free writing texts, which reflect particularities in the acquisition of linguistic repertoire. In the first image, the text says: "The cockroach says she has seven lace skirts, It's a lie, the cockroach only has one, Ha, ha, ha, ho, ho, ho, she only has one." This writing shows that the child has a good linguistic repertoire. In the second image, the text is: "Fruit game: once upon a time there were two children named Carlos and Gabi. They loved playing with fruits and loved eating them, and whoever ate faster won." With some omissions and letter substitutions, the child shows they are in the syllabic stage. In the third image, the child wrote some words, showing signs of being in the syllabic-alphabetic stage. In images four and five, the children show that they have a good linguistic repertoire.

Final reflections: progress and challenges in the literacy journey

This study emerged from the question of whether the use of different literacy methods brings gains in the teaching and learning process.

The exploratory research revealed that literacy practices can successfully integrate various methods and methodologies, maintaining their relevance and enhancing learning outcomes.

The initial diagnostic assessment showed heterogeneity in the students' writing hypotheses. As a result, the activities described in Practices 3 and 4 were designed to incorporate diverse texts. Regardless of their length, these texts played an essential role in fostering literacy within a meaningful context. The activities reflected communicative experiences and reinforced the alphabetic writing system as a fundamental foundation.

Interventions took place immediately after identifying students' challenges or strengths, aligning with an approach that blended multiple literacy methods simultaneously. Without prioritizing or isolating any specific method, this strategy allowed each student to learn in a unique way, responding to the different learning stimuli provided.

The writing samples from Practice 5 demonstrated significant progress compared to the initial diagnostic assessment. The analysis of these written productions revealed that the systematic application of learning regulatory tools, combined with interventions and periodic feedback, supported the construction of knowledge and the reformulation of hypotheses about the acquisition of conventional alphabetic writing, rather than merely memorizing isolated concepts.

Gradual progress in linguistic and functional aspects of the language varied among students. Some children fully adopted the conventional alphabetic writing system, even if not yet orthographically accurate, while others showed a progressive approximation toward this acquisition.

This study highlights the learning process was not limited to a single method. Instead, the plurality of approaches reinforced the importance of understanding the applicability and functionality of each method in different contexts. At this stage of schooling, the priority remains frequent and systematic reflection on the alphabetic writing system within the natural structure of the language.

The results of this study highlighted the importance of expanding students' experiences with written culture, incorporating various strategies and methodologies to strengthen literacy development from a functional perspective. Therefore, we conclude that the use of different literacy methods led to gains in the teaching and learning process.

We reaffirm that effective literacy instruction requires knowledge, understanding, differentiation, diversification, and guidance in selecting the most appropriate methodologies. Since one method may be effective for some students but not for others, it is essential to blend approaches to meet diverse learning needs. Most importantly, timely interventions must be made whenever necessary, adapting to each student's unique learning process.



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