

Literacy in the Romanian Educational Context: Challenges and Solutions

Editorial

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Literacy is one of the eight key competences for lifelong learning, defined as "the ability to identify, understand, express, create, and interpret concepts, feelings, facts, and opinions in both oral and written forms, using visual, auditory, and digital materials across disciplines and contexts" (EU, 2019). It is essential for effective communication and interaction, fostering creativity and further learning. Literacy skills are integral to a child's educational, professional, personal, and social development, enabling critical thinking, imagination, and creativity. Conversely, poor literacy skills can lead to professional failure and vulnerability to manipulation or fraud. As such, literacy is a priority in contemporary education.

In this context, issue 2 of the *Journal of Educational Sciences*, published on the journal's 25th anniversary, explores literacy in educational contexts. It presents specific theories and practices that trace the evolution of pedagogical concepts alongside systemic developments in education. Literacy, both a traditional and evolving concept, continually gains new meanings in diverse social and professional spheres.

Systemic solutions are essential to addressing literacy challenges in the Romanian educational system. One study in this issue emphasizes the timeliness of developing digital literacy, mainly through "Digital Oratory" in English language acquisition by high school students. This innovative approach aims to enhance public speaking competence in English by identifying effective predictors such as linguistic proficiency, prior experience, and intelligence. A unique course was designed to explore these predictors, offering research-based recommendations for instructional strategies tailored to diverse learners. The program's success underscores the need to integrate English Digital

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Oratory training into high school curricula, reflecting the growing demand among young people for public speaking skills in foreign and native languages.

Literacy is fundamentally a social practice, valued from early childhood in daily interactions. Regular school attendance and tailored pedagogical support are critical for developing literacy skills. Enhancing teaching practices, particularly in teaching core literacy components, can reduce disparities in students' development levels. Teacher training programs are necessary to equip educators with tools to assess and improve students' literacy skills. Using assessment results, teachers can implement individualized pedagogical measures to ensure progress.

Another study in this journal highlights teachers' perceptions of literacy and the urgent need for an equitable and inclusive educational system. Findings emphasize three key areas: prioritizing technical writing skills, teacher-centered methods that overlook individual student needs, and deficit-focused attitudes toward students with special needs. Implementing inclusive practices tailored to the social context can significantly improve literacy development.

Factors influencing reading skills during schooling extend beyond social, economic, and cultural contexts. Effective strategies, including adaptive instruction, teacher support, meaningful feedback, stimulation of reading engagement, and teacher-directed instruction, are crucial. One study advocates for the implementation of systemic intervention strategies for language disorders, which should be a collaborative effort between teachers and language therapists during primary education. Research conducted during the 2023–2024 school year demonstrated the effectiveness of combining classroom teaching with specialist interventions, yielding better outcomes in literacy development.

Family involvement is a crucial factor in early literacy development. As the first socializing agent, families play a significant role in providing the linguistic models children need. Parents can encourage literacy through daily conversations, exposure to reading materials, shared reading activities, and visits to libraries or bookstores. A study in this issue reveals that family literacy activities, such as storytelling and reading aloud, not only enhance children's critical thinking and intellectual curiosity but also strengthen parent-child bonds, fostering communication skills, creativity, and reflexivity.

Professor Charles Temple's important contribution to this thematic issue is his discussion of the role of research in shaping effective teaching practices. Using data from Romanian students' performance in the 2022 PISA tests, Temple emphasizes the importance of accurate result interpretation to design constructive interventions for future assessments. His article offers pedagogical recommendations for supporting literacy from early schooling and proposes inspiring research directions for Romanian educators, drawing on validated international tools and methodologies.

The studies in this issue collectively highlight the importance of early literacy development and its implications at the secondary level. They address systemic challenges such as low literacy levels among Romanian children, a problem requiring

macro-level solutions. The conclusions and recommendations provide actionable strategies for teachers to improve their methods, adopt differentiated approaches, and collaborate with organizations to support literacy development. Early and sustained support for children from families with limited educational resources is essential to increase academic success and reduce dropout rates. By addressing these challenges, Romania's education system can ensure a brighter future for all students.

References

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